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[THE DAWN OF A NEW LIGHT.]

which had been cast upon their chief and that a reward was out for his apprehension.

This only redoubled their fury, and some dark deed of violence would have been done at Northcliffe had not Martha ordered another fitting, and the tribe been conveyed farther from Northcliffe and nearer London.

Surrey being an open and well-wooded county they pitched their tents in it, and after a little time the first fire of their passionate resentment cooled down.

In the hearts of some lingered a hope that Lurli and Tazoni would be restored to them, as well as a threat for revenge upon those who had wronged them, and many a rough face was turned from the camp fire listeningly if a footstep came near the enclosure.

But neither Tazoni nor Lurli returned, and a sullen sort of disappointment was the prevailing sentiment.

In two hearts alone were something like tangible plots and definite plans hatching.

In the old and cunning bosom of Martha and the no less astute one of Zillah, the doctress.

These two were skilled in every kind of rough fitness, and they still hoped to rescue Lurli and restore the tribe to its old position.

Constant exercise and a life spent in the open air and sustained by plain and nutritious food had rendered Martha's old age a hardy one.

Her memory was most acute, her senses vigilant and her physical powers far better than those of a fashionable lady of forty.

From the Surrey common she would make journeys of two or three days' extent, passing quietly into London and haunting some of its quiet courts and byways, where her face was familiar, and extorted a rough sort of respect. Sometimes she would wander into more fashionable quarters, and, effecting an entry in the servants' hall, would reveal her fortune for some gaping maid servant in exchange for a small piece of silver and a little gossip.

In the last respect the old woman was inattentive, and welcomed every scrap of information which her patrons vouchsafed.

THE GIPSY PEER;

or,

A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Love's cunning is sweet cunning,

And so stealthy that hate alone can match it.

Prior.

ANXIOUS AS WE ARE TO TAKE UP THE THREAD OF OUR narrative where we dropped it for the time at Northcliffe and to transport our readers into the purer society of Florence and EarlsCourt, we cannot do so until we have explained the extraordinary escape of Lurli.

To do so we must for a short time follow the fortunes of her tribe from the point where they were bereft of their king and the daughter of their queen.

With the promptitude for which their kind are celebrated they had struck their tents, packed their belongings and started from Marston Moor, shaking the dust from their feet, as it were, against Northcliffe, and vowed vengeance against the betrayer of their hereditary princess.

Travelling all night, they had reached another common at some miles distant and there had been marked and visited by Mr. Samuel Hitchon.

He had been extremely careful not to breathe a word or accusation against Tazoni, or most assuredly he would not have left the camp with a whole skin. As it was, he would have obtained little information had it not been for the old woman Martha.

Much to the surprise of her tribe, she had suddenly displayed unusual activity and penetration, and had taken the command of the tribe in a dogged, firm sort of way which had procured her implicit obedience.

It was she who had given up the jewellery which Florence had given them, and it was she who, while seemingly giving the detective all the information in her power, was in reality balking him in his pursuit.

In a few days the tribe were aware of the stigma

In her long cloak and red hood she had obtained entrance at the Northcliffe House in Park Lane and had listened for hours to the chatter of the servants, deftly leading them to talk of their young master and keenly catching at any little scrap which might give her a clue to his movements.

But the servants knew little of Lord Raymond or his doings. He was in town, they knew, but he was stopping at his hotel or, perhaps, at the house by the Thames.

Martha had pricked up her ears at the last item.

"House by the Thames, my dear," she had repeated; "and pray where's that?"

But none of the servants could tell her.

They knew that Lord Raymond had a villa by the Thames and that was all.

A woman of her age might well have been excused if she had thrown up her task in despair, but Martha was made of the stuff that wears "nil desperandum" for its heart's motto, and despair was the last thing she thought of.

One day, in her wanderings, feeling weary and dispirited, she turned into a little street leading out of St. Martin's Lane.

It was a narrow, dirty little alley, with dirt-stained houses and dilapidated shops, half of the latter being devoted to the purposes of a barber and the other half to that of a brood of bird and dog-fanciers.

Lifting her little black eyes to scan the street for a moment, old Martha paused before one of the former, and pushing open the low door shuffled quickly in.

The little shop was half in darkness, but by the dim light of a tallow candle a shrivelled, bent, little man was at work on a shaggy-looking wig.

He looked up and stared at her through his spectacles with his head on one side without the faintest sign of recognition at first, but when she came within the light of the candle he rose and limped forward, very much like a lame jackdaw, said, in a thin voice:

"What, is it you, Martha, is it? It's time you and I were under ground, old lady! Old Martha, eh?"

He dragged a chair forward as he spoke, and Martha seated herself, keeping her dark eyes fixed upon him as a cat might upon the same lame jackdaw and watching him as he shuffled to the candle and snuffed it with his long, skinny fingers.

"Ay, it's me, Silas, alive still, ye see; and the wig's alive too, I see, he! he! When's that wig going home? You've been curling it and dressing it for the last twenty years."

The old man laughed in a noiseless, ghastly sort of way and seated himself, fingering the wig as before.

"And what's brought you up to town, and how's Colin and Zillah, and Zera—oh, Zera's dead, isn't she? A wonderful fine woman, Zera! Ah! deary me!"

Old Martha pushed back her hood and, rising, shuffled to the door, which she locked.

The old man looked up with faint surprise, which was heightened as Martha came back to him and whispered:

"When are ye going to send to Amsterdam again, Silas, oh?"

A wonderful change came over the old wrinkled face. It brightened and sharpened as if lit up by an inward flash of intelligence.

"Eh?" he repeated, dropping the wig and rubbing his knees. "Amsterdam; got anything worth sending, old girl, eh?"

Martha nodded mysteriously.

"Perhaps," she said, parting her lips.

"Stones or metal?" asked the old man, laughing silently. "I likes stones best, because they ain't so easy traced. Nothing like stones, old girl, alius make it stones."

"Perhaps it's stones, and perhaps it's gold. What do ye say to diamonds, Silas? Buy diamonds, eh?"

"Diamonds!" repeated the old man, with a suppressed whistle. "Ye don't say—"

"Ay, but when can ye send them? I want them out of the way if they're going at all. You understand? When are you sending?"

"A'most directly," replied the old man, rising and raking in a corner at the back of his wig-block, "a'most directly, my dear. There's a parcel ready to go off now. I was only awaiting for the next boat; lucky, ain't it?"

Old Martha's black eyes sparkled, but she toned them down to stoical indifference as he turned to her.

"Oh, a parcel, eh? Some pretty things, Silas? Some pretty things?"

"Pretty? Beautiful!" exclaimed the old man, lifting his hands, in one of which was clutched a small key, the result of his raking. "Beautiful; b'long to an earl, old girl. He! he! Oh, beautiful!"

"Let's have a peep, Silas," said Martha, with well-feigned carelessness.

"So you shall, so you shall," croaked the old man, and he caught up the candle. "You don't mind the dark, Martha, eh? You won't be frightened, eh?" he chuckled.

To this piece of pleasantness the old gipsy vonah-safed no reply, and she sat motionless, her dark eyes glittering with stealthy excitement and cunning.

A few minutes the old man returned from some den at the back carrying a small dingy box.

With this under his arm he limped to the door and tried it.

"Locked, all right. Nothing like being snug and comfortable when the pretties are about, old girl. Now there, what do you think of 'em, eh? Ain't they beautiful!"

And with a grim chuckle of enjoyment he opened the lid and displayed a heap of glittering jewellery.

Bracelets, chains, rings, diamond pendants, ruby suites, emerald scarf-pins, dainty toy watches, all heaped together in a dirty, greasy box in the hands of a Seven Dials barber.

Old Martha bent forward and frowned at them with her thick eyebrows.

Her lips were tightly shut, her hands clasped on her stick, but her eyes spoke volumes, and seemed to return the glitter of the precious heap with sparkle for sparkle.

"Look at 'em!" croaked the old man, exultingly. "Look at 'em! Ain't they beautiful, old girl? He! he! It was a bad day's work when your people gave up the profession and turned honest! Honest! He! he! Who'd be honest if they could get a little nest of pretty darlings like these? Ain't they beautiful?"

"Beautiful!" echoed the old gipsy, huskily, stretching out her skinny hand and taking up a bracelet, which she examined closely.

"Looking at the crest, eh?" croaked the old man.

"That's no matter. They're clever people across the water, and they can cut that out. Trust them for doing it neatly. Old Silas knows a trick or two! He! he! There's a beautiful stone!" and he held up a diamond earring.

Old Martha nodded.

"A pretty lot, old Silas; a pretty lot, and who brought 'em, eh?"

The old man winked at her with a cunning leer.

"That's telling, old girl."

Old Martha gave a gesture of contempt.

"We know each other, old Silas? I'm a curious old woman. Who brought 'em?"

The old man looked the box, put it under his arm and bent his head down to hers.

"What do you say to that clever rogue, Luke, old girl?" he whispered.

"Luke!" muttered the old gipsy, clutching her stick, and trembling with excitement.

"Sh-sh-sh!" hissed the old man, warningly. "Don't speak so loud. Walls have ears, eh? Yes, clever Luke, he! he! He is clever too. He's a fine rogue, and will make his fortune."

Martha rose.

"Have you paid him, Silas?" she asked, in a suppressed voice.

The old man nodded.

"Yes, every penny. He! he! They don't think old Silas has got a five-pound-note to bless himself with, but they're mistaken, ain't they, old girl? He! he! Clever Luke. But how about your pretty shiny boy? When are they coming?"

Martha drew her hood round her, and chattered at her stick.

"Not yet a while; they'll come soon, old Silas, but you must keep these others till they do; you can't make two lots of 'em, old Silas; it would be dangerous, dangerous. They'd want to know what Silas was sending to Amsterdam so often for. Better wait and send 'em together, eh?"

"True, true," muttered the old man, smoothing his bristly chin. "I'll send 'em together; but don't be long, old girl, don't be long. Old Silas gives a good price, remember; he gives a good price."

Old Martha nodded assentingly, and the old man, muttering still, limped to the door and unlocked it.

Martha gave him good-night, and shuffled out. When she had proceeded a hundred yards or so she stopped and looked up at the sky with suddenly twinkling eyes, that seemed to search the stars.

"Ah, ah, Master Luke! I've got you, have I? Traitor, my chosen one, now your throat!"

Some weeks passed. Lurli, little reeling of the unwearying efforts that were being made by her faithfulkins for her rescue, was passing away in her golden prison, dressed for liberty by night and longing for death by day. Since the day Lord Raymond had appeared life had become almost unbearable to her, and often such thoughts would enter her brain as she looked down from her window. It seemed so easy to turn aside the whole misery by one dreadful resolution. But that wholesome dread of the hereafter which makes cowards of us all kept her from that last direful resource of the helpless and persecuted, and she lived on and endured as best she might her imprisonment and her never-ceasing dread of her tormentor.

The servants were kind to her in their way, and really commiserated her, but they were powerless to help her, for they dared not connive at her escape.

It was with feelings of despair most intense that she watched familiar figures passing on the road or river, but the handsome, graceful form of Sir Harry Banister brought her some indescribable relief, and she often spent the day pondering upon that sorrowful shake of the head and his mournful and pitiful sigh. At last, from much meditating upon him, she began to look for his appearance, and feel that she missed something when his boat did not glide up the stream.

Even so a prisoner will welcome the bird at his barred window, and feel grateful for its familiar presence.

Now, during this strange portion of her life the gipsy girl felt grateful that fate had guided Tazon's taste as it had done. Loving books himself, he had naturally desired to awaken a desire for learning in Lurli. He had taught her to read and to write.

Now she was grateful unspeakably, for there were plenty of books in her prison, and she was driven to them perforce.

Day by day she read and learned.

Incessantly but surely the rustic, uncultured gipsy girl was developing into a softer, more pliable and intelligent woman.

Unwillingly Lord Raymond was working her good, so strangely does Providence use even bad actions to unseen good.

One day as she sat reading and thinking she heard the hum of voices raised in admiration and feminine excitement.

With languid interest she rose and approached the door.

As she did so one of the maids—the one who had treated her with the greatest consideration—ran up the stairs, and in an excited voice whispered:

"Oh, miss, what do you think? Here's a pedlar come! She's got the most beautiful things you ever saw; such brooches and bracelets. I never saw such beauties, and they're so cheap!"

Lurli smiled sadly, and returned to her sofa.

The girl followed her, and looked down at her pitifully.

"Poor thing!" she said, half-aloud. "Nothing seems to interest her. It do seem a shame to coop such a bright young creature up in this place from day to day and week to week."

"Miss," she continued, with sudden alacrity, "if I let you come down and see the jewellery will you give me your word of honour you won't get me into trouble?"

Lurli, who had gone to the window, and had almost forgotten that the girl was there, turned impatiently.

"I will promise not to run away, if that is what you mean," she said, quietly.

"Very well; I'm sure you wouldn't get me into trouble," said the girl. "Make haste, then, and come down; she's in the hall, and I expect Jane and Susan will pick out all the best."

She ran down as she spoke, and Lurli followed.

It was well she did, for what she saw gave her so sudden a shock that she staggered, and was obliged to clutch the balustrade for a moment.

There, sitting in the hall, with a pedlar's box open on her lap, and surrounded by the eager and desirous servants, was Martha!

Lurli stood on the stairs and pressed her hand against her bosom, vainly striving to still her beating heart.

The old gipsy's behaviour was a lesson to her.

Martha's eyes were not raised the quarter of an inch, though she knew that what she had been searching for was found at last, and was standing there above her.

Calmly, patiently, she handed the trinkets out to the maid as if no such being as Lurli existed.

Lurli came slowly down, and stood at the back of the group.

They made way for her to draw near the box, but she kept back, and quietly pushed one of the girls—a pretty, brown-eyed little maid—into her former place, and so kept her own face from view.

"There," croaked Martha, throwing a gilt chain round the neck of the pretty girl, fastening a gaudy bracelet on the arm of the cook, and pinning a brooch on the bosom of Lurli's maid, "there! Nothing can be more beautiful, my dears. They're the best the old gipsy ever had; and so cheap, oh? So very cheap."

Then as each girl stepped back to view herself in the full glass, and arrange the trinket to the best advantage, Martha glanced once at Lurli with a smile, and said:

"And won't the pretty lady buy a little trifle from the old gipsy?"

"No," said Lurli, with feigned dignity. "I do not require any, thank you."

Martha glared at her approvingly, and, altering her look to one of deference, as the girls clustered round again, took out a ring.

Lurli took it and examined it, bending her head down once, so hiding her face from the group, who were one and all too intent upon the trinkets to notice her, even had she showed any emotion.

"There's a pretty ring; buy that of the poor old gipsy. It's very cheap, lady, very cheap."

Lurli took some money from her pocket—it was but the little she had about her when she was carried off—and bought the brooch, the bracelet, and the chain, and handed them over to the girls, who were loud and profuse in their thanks, and wanted to purchase the ring to present to her in return, but Lurli declined it, and old Martha, after using more persuasion, replaced it in the pack, saying:

"Perhaps the lady would like something in this way. Here's a pretty little love-ballad."

And she took one of the thin sheet-ballads from the bottom of her pack and handed it with a significant glance to Lurli.

Lurli took it and the girls crowded round her.

"And here's another," said Martha, "but it's in a foreign language; perhaps the pretty lady would like to hear the poor old gipsy's tongue."

"Yes, oh, yes! do let her read it, miss!" said the girls, in a chorus. "We should like to hear the gipsy language."

"You may read it, if you like," said Lurli, quietly, nearly faint with anxiety.

"And the pretty ladies can look over the poor old gipsy's pack while she reads her love ballad," croaked old Martha, unstrapping the box and handing it to the eager maids, who instantly commenced an excited examination of its contents, and paid little attention to the ballad.

Old Martha took a ballad from her box and crooned out in a singsong voice, and in the Romany dialect:

"Lurli, pride of my heart, thy friends are near thee. Keep a steadfast face and a clear eye, that thy enemies may not suspect thee. To-morrow, when darkness falls, go thou to the window of the room adjoining thy bedchamber and wait for the hand that shall save thee."

She repeated this three times, pausing at the sen-

tences as if they were verses, until a quick flash of Lurli's eye told her that she was understood, and that her directions would be followed.

When she finished the servants giggled.

"It sounds very queer," said the cook. "But I daresay it's very pretty if one only knew what it meant, but who's to understand that queer lingo?"

"Who, indeed?" said Lurli, raising her eyebrows.

"Can the poor old gipsy sell the pretty ladies any more pretty things?" crowed old Martha, preparing to depart, for now that she had effected her purpose she was anxious to get away.

The girls made a few more purchases, and Lurli, to prevent the slightest suspicion, did not wait to see them completed, but went slowly upstairs, the words of Martha's clever and precious ballad ringing in her ears and producing a sweeter music than any other sounds on earth could have done.

The rest of the day she spent in schooling herself into an assumption of sad and calm despair.

At night she managed to weep—really with joy and excitement, but it was put to the credit of her hopelessness, and her maid indulged in a sympathetic duet with the cook when she left her unfortunate mistress for the night.

The next day—the last she hoped to spend in that horrible prison—was a still greater trial.

Try as she would to sigh a smile seemed to chase the sadness from her face.

She trembled lest some small mishap should occur to spoil Martha's plans and prevent her escape.

At night she went to her room with her pulse at fever-heat. Directly the maid left her she re-dressed herself and stole into the next room, crouching in the dense darkness and waiting for her rescuer.

At last, after what seemed hours to her, she heard a faint click on the window ledge; then there flashed a dim light and a man leapt noiselessly into her room.

It was Colin!

With a bound she caught his arm.

He uncovered his dark lantern directly, and laid his finger on her lips to warn her to silence.

Then he lifted her in his arms, and, stepping on to the window-sill, cautiously descended a rope ladder.

In a few minutes Lurli felt they had reached the ground. A few more moments and he had climbed the wall, lifted her over by means of a noosed rope, and then she was in Martha's arms, saved—at least for the time!

Colin, with Zingari acuteness, had thought it best that the two women should make off by themselves, on the principle of two attracting less notice than three, and so the two, crouching together, sped at the best pace they could through the Richmond lanes.

Once only they suffered a shock of alarm, and that was when a horseman stared at them as they passed and seemed about to follow them, but he changed his mind, apparently, and they crept on unchallenged.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Nay, this wrong'd and wildered brain
Is sane. Give me some tea

That I may prove it.

Madmen have no such thoughts as mine.

EVER dreary was it now amidst the leafless woods of EarlsCourt. The autumn tints had gone and left nothing but a faint remembrance of them in sodden piles of wind-tossed leaves lying in humble vassalsage at the feet of the monarchs they had so lately and exquisitely adorned.

Dreary as they were those self-same woods possessed a charm for their young mistress, and fair, proud Florence found some sweet solace in wandering silently through their moss-grown pathways or scattering their brilliant leaves with her horse's hoofs.

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder," says the Spanish proverb, and most assuredly Florence had grown fonder, if not of the mysterious Gipsy King, of the part to which he belonged.

She would ride no other horse but her Turquoise, whom he had tamed. Those dells and ravines in the wood where she had seen or met him were her favourite resorts, and not a day passed but the Spanish Don Quixote, with its love poem on the flyleaf, gladdened and yet saddened her heart.

How slowly the winter had passed for Lady Florence of Northcliffe none but she could have told. She seemed to have lived a life since that hour when she parted for what appeared likely to prove the last time from the noble, unselfish being who had twice risked his life for her.

Ah! sometimes the proud beauty felt inclined to wish that the gipsy had let her die rather than inspire her with a hopeless passion and leave her torn with doubt and distrust of him. Of the struggle that was going on within her refined, cultivated nature no one had the slightest knowledge. She had always been a silent, self-contained girl; she was now only a little more silent and a little more reserved.

If Lady Darleagle came upon her when she often sat in her boudoir, her face leaning on her hand and her large, dreamy eyes fixed upon the awaying trees of the EarlsCourt woods, her ladyship merely thought that Florence was a little dull and thinking perhaps of poor Lord Northcliffe.

The mother, usually so keen-eyed and watchful, noted nothing of the constant inward struggle and deep self-communing, and it was left for the duller and presumably half-insane Lord Northcliffe to discover that all was not well with the girl whom he loved as a daughter.

Every day, wet or dry, Florence mounted Turquoise and rode over to Northcliffe to sit and read or talk—sometimes to remain silent with her hand in his—with the sick ear.

Whatever might happen, whatever visitors might chance to be at EarlsCourt proud Lady Florence never missed the two hours' ministrations, and Lord Northcliffe had grown to look for her beautiful face as regularly as his breakfast or the morning papers and welcomed it far more than anything else.

Sometimes Lady Northcliffe would come into the earl's sitting-room and form the duet into a trio, but as the management of the estate devolved upon her during Raymond's absence, and she was usually busy in the early part of the morning, Florence and Lord Northcliffe were left together.

One morning—the morning on which Tazoni and Sir Harry Beaulacore were forming a friendship in the shooting gallery—she had arrived as usual and with the folds of her exquisitely fitting riding habit in her hands was walking quietly through the hall to the earl's apartments when a footman who had been unpacking a box at a side table slipped aside and allowed her to use a pile of books.

"What are those, Phillip?" she asked, quite unable to pass them unnoticed.

"New books, my lady," said the man, only too anxious to have the pleasure of a word with beautiful Lady Florence.

"New books? Let me see them," she said, and in her thoughtful way she laid her whip down upon the table and commenced turning the volumes over.

"Has Lord Northcliffe seen them?" she asked.

"No, my lady," said the man. "I have only just unpacked them."

"Then I will take a few with me," she said, and gathering a pile of them in her arms she went on her way, the man preceding her and opening the door of Lord Northcliffe's room.

The old earl looked up with his sweet, gentle-bred smile and held out his hand over her shoulder.

"Well, my dear, you are some minutes late. Don't think I reproach you, but I look for your coming and grow anxious if the clock strikes while you are not here."

"I was punctual, dear Lord Northcliffe," said Florence, in her soft, loving voice, as she stooped over and kissed his white, smooth forehead. "I believe Turquoise knows the time as well as I do and keeps a private watch of her own concealed in her harness. If I am a few minutes late she gallops at extra speed, but if there is plenty of time she canters along as easily as you please; quickly or slowly, she always manages to get to the steps as the clock strikes."

"Clover little mare, almost as clever as her mistress," murmured the old man. "But what have you there?"

"Books; but for them I should have been punctual. Look what a pile; quite a treat for me; I see a few new books now."

The words left her lips unwillingly, and she flushed with anger the moment after, remembering how bad the man was who used to bring them to her.

"A treat for you!" said the earl. "I sometimes think you read too much, Florence. You look pale at times. But, come, sit down in your old place and examine your treasures. I am afraid you will find many of them not worth perusing. Books are not what they were in my young days—and very little else."

And he sighed.

"Let me read to you first," said Florence, taking up the paper.

"No; I would rather not," said the earl. "I want to think this morning. My brain feels clearer and my memory seems better."

He sighed again, as if memory would only yield him pain, and Florence, anxious to gratify his every wish, seated herself on a low settle near his chair and dragged another chair with the book upon it within reach.

One by one she took the volumes up and skimmed them through, tossing some aside with an emphatic curl of the lip, smiling at others and gravely and curiously perusing a few.

Lord Northcliffe leaned back silently and dreamily regarding the exquisite profile of her face and noticing with absent admiration and affection the fleeting expressions portrayed on it.

Presently Florence settled down to a volume and seemed lost in it.

The time sped slowly on, leaf after leaf was turned and still she read on.

The old man had dropped off into a gentle reverie that was more like slumber, and still she sat eagerly reading the book, her face resting upon one hand and her lips parted with a sad yet pleased expression. Suddenly a deep sigh burst involuntarily from her lips and her eyes gradually filled with tears.

One of them dropped upon the open page of the book and she closed it. But she did not lay it aside, and, still holding it, leaned back and gazed mournfully upon the bare, bleak wintry prospect.

The silence of the room, the chill, repelling aspect of the view, her own slowly passing thoughts were all in harmony with the mournful, wistful music of the book, and her heart seemed to open suddenly, and for the first time reveal itself to her.

She could not restrain her tears, and Lord Northcliffe, hearing a brief, smothered sob, woke from his sleep, and stretching out a loving yet alarmed hand gently grasped her arm.

"Florence," he said, tenderly, "you are unhappy?"

"No, my dear Lord Northcliffe," she said, quickly but brokenly, "I am not indeed."

But as she knelt at his knee her mournful face belied her, and her tears came so quickly that she was compelled to hide them on his breast.

The old man trembled as he laid his thin white hands in a silent benediction upon her beautiful head.

"Florence," he said, hurriedly, and in a low, mellow tone, "Florence! Do not deny it, you are unhappy. They think I am childish and do not notice anything that goes on around me; but I do, Florence, I do, and I have seen what they, with all their wisdom, appear to have disregarded—that you have grown thinner, paler and more thoughtful of late. Florence, dear Florence, I had thought that you had exhausted your young, fair strength in administering to this feeble life of mine, and I have prayed Heaven's blessing on you night and morn, but now your tears undeceive me. Something else beyond all your gentle care for me has made you pale and wan. You are unhappy, child; then there is a double bond between us, for I also am unhappy, wretchedly, helplessly and hopelessly unhappy. Confide in me, Florence, and if I can help you it will serve to shed a light upon these last days which, but for thee and my dear wife, would be all darkness. Tell me, Florence, what is your sorrow. Let me look at your face."

And tenderly, with all a woman's gentleness, he raised her face and peered lovingly into it. Florence tried to smile, and succeeded, but the smile was more touching than her tears. Lord Northcliffe bent forward and kissed her with a sigh.

"What book were you reading, my dear?" he asked.

Florence held the book out to him.

"Poems," he said, reading the titlepage. "You are fond of poetry and always were. But who is the author? Frank Forest. I never heard of him."

"Nor I," said Florence. "But he must be a great poet," she added, with a faint laugh that was rather treacherous, "for he has made me cry, and that, they say, is a test of true poetry."

"Ay," said the old man, and with the book in his hand he let his gaze wander to the window.

Florence hoped that he had forgotten her and her unwanted tears, and stood quiet and motionless by his side.

Suddenly—so suddenly that he startled her—the old man turned in his chair and, grasping her arm, looked searching into her face with a vague alarm.

"Florence!" he cried, with tremulous agitation. "You don't love him! Don't tell me you love him!"

Florence, thinking only of one being and knowing too well that she did love him, paled consciousness and shrank from the old man's eye and grasp.

"No, no!" he cried, seeing her draw back, "no, no! It must not be! It shall not be! Florence, you don't know all. You must not love him! You shall not love him! He is not worthy of your love. Girl, I tell you he is a fiend!"

Gradually his voice had increased in depth and earnestness until it had almost reached a pitch of passion.

Florence—still with her arm in his grasp—rose, alarmed but calm and possessed of her usual presence of mind.

"Dear Lord Northcliffe," she said, soothingly. "Be calm, be calm. Of whom do you speak?"

"Of whom should I speak but of him? Be calm! Would you have me stand by, calm and silent, girl, and see you sacrificed to a fiend? Florence, I would rather see you in your grave than married to him. Ay, don't look so alarmed at me. I am not mad! Give me that book, I can read it word for word."

ask me some question, I can reply to it soon enough! I am not mad! It is they who are deceived by him who are mad, not I! Listen!" here he drew her down to her old position, and, glancing at the door and window with eager and suspicious eyes, he bent his lips down to her ear, and in a hurried but impressive whisper, which Florence never afterwards forgot, said:

"Florence, mark me well when I say that you must never marry him, ay, though you love him better than life itself! You know how I came to be lying here, a helpless cripple with the name of a madman, you know how. Some ruffian dealt me a blow—I feel it scorching my brain. Some vile would-be murderer—for mark me, child, he meant murder—who raised his hand against me that night. He was fighting for more than that night's plunder, for more, far more; and had I been carried to my grave instead of to this room he would have been glad. I remember that night, every moment of it, and I remember him, every feature of that unnatural face is burnt into my soul! Florence, listen! You must pluck him from your heart, for the man who broke open the strong-room and left me for dead is the man you love!"

Florence's head fell back and her hands clasped her temples with a low moan of agony.

"No, no!" she breathed. "It cannot be! Oh, Heaven! have pity on me! His name! Tell me his name!"

Lord Northcliffe bent down to her, his face white and working with emotion.

"Florence, it was—"

At that moment the door opened and Lady Northcliffe's voice was heard speaking to a servant as she entered.

Lord Northcliffe broke off suddenly and with alarmed agitation.

"Hush!" he whispered. "She must not know! Pull down the blinds. Do not let her see that you have been crying. Hush! Not a word! She must not know!"

(To be continued.)

REIGATE CASTLE

LORD SOMERS, lord of the manor of Reigate, has just presented to that town, in the shape of a lease to the Mayor and Corporation for 999 years at a nominal rent, several acres of land, immediately adjoining and overlooking the main street, as a pleasure and recreation ground for the inhabitants. Formerly the place was a sort of wilderness, a receptacle for all kinds of rubbish.

To rid the town of what was regarded as a public nuisance, Mr. Wilson Saunders, F.R.S., and a few others, having obtained the necessary legal sanction from Lord Somers, converted the place into a delightful pleasure ground, with pretty walks and many flower-beds and seats beneath the shade of ancient elms. In this transformed condition it has now been handed over to the Corporation, to be maintained and kept in order out of the municipality revenues for the benefit of the burgesses.

The Castle Grounds, for such they are called, possess special interest as being the site of the ancient fortified Castle of Reigate, said by Aubrey to have been built anterior to the Conquest, and supposed to have been chosen by the Romans to guard the old line of communication to Croydon. The structure has now completely vanished, its demolition having been nearly accomplished during the Civil Wars, and the only relic of it is a barbican, built out of the ruins about one hundred years ago. The castle court now forms the higher and principal part of the pleasure ground, and from it is to be seen one of the most picturesque landscapes in Surrey. There is an uninterrupted view down the valley to Dorking, with the grand chain of hills on the north side; and, looking southward, the houses and streets below, backed by the high straight ridge of Lord Somers's park beyond, present an unusual appearance. Under the pleasure grounds run some extensive caves, hollowed out of the solid sand rock with remarkable accuracy, and supposed to have been contemporaneous with the castle.

The principal cave is called "The Barons' Cave," the tradition being that the confederate nobles here first debated upon and arranged the terms of Magna Charta. The aged châtelaine in charge of the place never fails to point out to visitors the seat, composed of Roman brickwork, where the barons sat in consultation. A massive flight of stone steps, supposed to have led up from the caves into the castle, still remains, and there was formerly an exit, now stopped up, into the graft, or dry ditch, without the castle, and supposed to have been used as a sallyport. A part of the old moat is also included in the new pleasure ground. The estimated cost of keeping the place in order is less than 200*l.* a year, and it may be mentioned that some members of the Corporation opposed the acceptance of the offer of Lord Somers on

the ground that the rates ought not to be burdened with an expenditure which would only immediately benefit one part of the borough. This argument was overruled.

P. F.

AN AUTUMN LESSON.

THERE is no portion of our broad earth more beautiful in its autumnal season than our own land. We may have witnessed in other land the changing seasons come and go; beheld the glory falling on Alpine hills, the blue skies of Italy and the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and yet have learned no more lessons of the beautiful than autumn taught in our own home. The forests flush into living colour and wave crimson and golden banners, tokens of wealth and prosperity; the sky turns more softly blue; the waters of the lake gleam bright and para, holding tenderly the reflection of the trees, as if the scarlet and amber were secrets whispered by the low bending branches.

Everywhere around, above, beneath, there is a glow of autumnal beauty. There is a stillness in the air—a thought of peace wafted over the mountains—a voice telling the weary that in autumn time there is rest. The season's queen comes softly through the forest; as her garments touch the earth the flowers take deeper hues, and at every step new loveliness springs up. Her throne is the hills, and royal indeed is her sway. We hail her as the season's artist, poet, queen. The labours of the husbandman are rewarded, while high festival is made for all.

Never was court of an Eastern queen so splendid or retinue so great. Like a true queen she seeks ever the glory and prosperity of her realm and while she rules she teaches. First, she teaches her subjects art. With delicate fingers she touches the tree-tops, and they glow with warmth; she paints the leaves of the woodbine, and turns the oak to amber brown; a golden crown rests on the maple, which trembles and looks a very King Midas. The ferns and mosses lift their faces, and she breathes on them a richer green. The sweet-briar bends its head, waiting to be decked with crimson jewels. The queen smiles on the brook, and with a song it catches the brightness and dashes onward, while the willows and silver birches, standing graceful and tall, whisper together and bow their heads at her approach. On, on she passes, until all within her domain are robed and crowned with beauty. Still she lingers until she writes the season's poem, and then, her work ended, she vanishes.

C. A.

DO RIGHT.

If every one of your readers would pause for a moment's consideration, he would discover, if, indeed, he had not discovered it already, in which case we entreat him to examine into the matter, that every act we do, whether good or bad, is accompanied with a natural law peculiar to the act. What of it? We will see:

Yonder walks a man. On his countenance are the imprints of sorrow. He has just lost a child by death. He is now on his way to the undertaker's; but before reaching there he steps on a piece of orange-peel, slips down, breaks a leg, and is thus borne home to his afflicted friends, his errand undone. This man has done an act by sheer accident, yet the consequences are just the same as though he had stepped upon the cause of the accident by cool deliberation. Hence you will see that it makes no difference with the natural law, accompanying each act, whether we act by deliberation, by indiscretion, by carelessness, by accident, or by any means whatsoever. Many a young man to-day does wrong wilfully, because he knows he will be approved by at least the majority of his acquaintances, who, like himself, have not the manly courage to do right, nor even to disown the wrong-doing of others. This is all wrong, for the reason, as has already been suggested, that each act, whether good or bad, has its law.

If we could know how many people there are to-day carrying in their breasts a secret which cannot be divulged only at the severe cost of terrible anguish, I think we would be astonished. Such a secret might be the effect, or law, of an act of youthful indiscretion, which proper training at the right time might have been instrumental in averting. It might be the indulgence of a passion that should have been curbed according to a knowledge of right; it might be in the telling a falsehood for self-interest; it might be one or more acts of a hundred and one we ought never to do. Avoid wrong-doing for its sad and sometimes awful consequences. Do right for its own sake and your own, whereby you will bestow upon yourself the precious contentment of a clear conscience. I. N.

M. GUILLAUME GUILZOT, son of the illustrious statesman, has been lately in London, engaged in making researches with respect to early English literature,

especially that of the Chaucer period, on which he is about to deliver a course of lectures at the College de France.

THE death of Eugène Renduel, one of the most notable Parisian publishers, is reported by the Paris papers. Renduel had the boldness to publish the first works of Victor Hugo. When Heinrich Heine went to offer him "Reisebilder," he said to him asto others, "You will drive me to die on straw." "Yes," said Heine, "on the straw of a chateau." The words were prophetic, for he died in his seventy-sixth year. The friends of Victor Hugo say that Renduel realized 200,000 francs by "Notre Dame de Paris" alone.

AFTER THE SEASON.

WELL, the "season" is over at last, dear Maud, And to-morrow we go back to town; Let us see what we've done to regret or applaud Through the summer; come here and sit down. Mamma has brought us out fairly, my dear, By seaside and mountain and lake, Let us see how we've turned to account her sweet care,

If only for her poor own sake. Your blonde style caused the envy of girls At the mammoth hotel on the shore While I fancy the gleam of my soft blonde curls Was never so famous before.

And, up in the mountains, if many a youth For your dark glance did hopelessly pine, There were fully as many, to tell the truth, Who were slain by these blue eyes of mine. In dancing and driving and boating and all, We were ne'er at a loss for a beat, We mixed with gay maskers and whirled through the ball.

Till faces and hearts were aglow. We swept the piazzas in the loveliest trains, While mamma looked on, nothing loth. And the fops, with eye-glasses and exquisite canes,

Whispered sweet honeyed nothings to both. But, though ever so ready devotion to swear, To propose they were dreadfully shy; We were just like two dolls fitted up for a fair, And nobody ready to buy.

How my heart used to sink—did not yours, Sister Maud?

And I wept on my pillow at night, To think that we two should be foisted abroad In such a contemptible light! And now we return to the dingy old home, As poor and as proud as before:— How sad it will be to see poor papa come All jaded and worn as of yore, And to think what the season through which we will have raged

Must have been to his poor slender purse, And we yet unmarried—not even engaged! At me! such a life seems a curse. And yet there are hundreds just like us, my dear,

Who, to revel in sham for a space, Must pinch, cramp and starve for the rest of the year.

To again take their stands in the race. Yet I know I'm a burden—poor papa's so worn—

That there's no other course but to wed. I wish I were married, rich, great, nobly born Or I almost wish I were dead!

N. D. N.

WHERE IS THE ARMY?—A contemporary says:—Whether we choose to adopt the old name and system of the militia, or some new plan, matters little so long as we resolve that we will at once lay the foundation of a numerous and well-disciplined defensive force. Surely every person who has travelled in Germany this summer must feel ashamed of any comparison between the thoroughness of its defensive organization and the unreality of our own. We may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive our neighbours. The two most popular and patriotic statesmen of their time were the Duke of Wellington and Lord Palmerston; and if they were alive now it is certain they would combine in urging us to cherish no illusions, and prepare for all contingencies. It is chiefly due to them that our ports and arsenals are defensible, but a fortress is useless without soldiers. There can be no national life worth living without honour; and honour, as the world goes, can only be kept by readiness to fight for it. Until the millennium begins, "Nemo me impune lacessit" is the best principle a nation can adopt. This was the Palmerstonian principle, and we take it to be orthodox Conservatism.



TREYVLIAN; ON, ENTOMBED ALIVE.

CHAPTER IX.

Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks,
Shall win my love. — Shakespeare.

The girl stood for a second or two listening to the sound of the doctor's footsteps as he went tramp, tramp, along a passage in a distant part of the house. She fancied she heard her own name called from the other end of the passage in which she stood. She listened intently, and again heard the word "Fan" pronounced in a low voice.

It was the work of a moment to lock her room door, put the key in her pocket, and send along the passage in the direction of the voice that called her. "Oh, Tom!" said the girl, rushing into the arms which were stretched out to receive her, "father's off to the west-ward to put the iron straps on that pretty girl that came in two or three weeks ago, and he's going to lash her when they're on."

"The old villain!" exclaimed the young man; "I'll soon put an end to that. Is that the way he curses people of being melancholy mad? Let me go," continued he, trying to disengage himself from the girl, who clung to him so as to prevent his leaving her.

"You mustn't go just now, Tom," said the girl, speaking in an earnest voice; "he would murder you."

"Murder me! do you think I couldn't manage him?"

"Maybe ye could, but he would only have to blow his whistle and all the bulldogs would be on you in five minutes."

"If the bulldogs are worth the name of men they'll help me to keep the old scoundrel from lashing a woman, and such a quiet creature that never speaks a word, and so pretty, with her fair hair."

The young man struggled to free himself, but the girl clung to him persistently.

"Tom, Tom," urged she, "don't go now. It takes quite a long while to put on the straps, and maybe he'll not be able to fasten them."

"The old villain! I'll leave this house to-morrow, and I'll go up to London and inform on him. I would have left before now and informed on him, only that he was your father; I've seen enough of his ways."

"He's not my father, Tom," said the girl, in an agitated voice. "Old mammy, who died this morning, told me he's not. My mother was sent here

by a man who said he was her brother, and the doctor used her ill, and she died the day I was born, and she gave this ring to mammy, and mammy kept it on a string round her neck for fear any would see it, and she gave it to me this morning."

As Fan spoke she showed the young man a broad gold ring, tied to a faded piece of ribbon which she took from her bosom.

"Oh, Tom," she continued, with a little sob, "old mammy told me such terrible things they did, the doctor and his wife both, to my mother. I'll go away with you any time now, and be glad to go."

"I'll go to-morrow; and an hour after I'll come back for—"

A loud sound as of some heavy body dashed on the floor, accompanied by smothered cries of terror, interrupted the young man, who at once started off in the direction from which the sounds came, the girl following, but keeping at a little distance on the side of the passage where the light from the weak night lamps fell dimmest.

Directed by the cries, Tom entered the passage to the cell where Ethel was confused. The door was wide open, the candle flaring and guttering, with a long, black-burnt wick, placed in the doorway.

Inside he beheld the doctor curled up in one corner of the cell, with distended nostrils and staring eyes, wild with dread, crying out in low, muttered tones, as if afraid of being heard:

"The mad dog! the mad dog! he's tearing me to pieces."

As he spoke he kept leaping up in the corner, only to fall down again.

Ethel was sitting on the miserable pallet-bed of straw, which was the only seat the cell afforded, the straps, great things of iron, held together by leather thongs, lying at her feet, where they had fallen from the miscreant, who now strove with the drunkard's madness in the corner of the cell, just as he was about to fasten her down with them to iron rings placed in the floor for the purpose.

"Keep up your heart," said Tom, speaking to Ethel; "I'll take the old villain out of this, and come back to see what I can do for you."

Ethel looked at him as if she scarce understood what he said. The whole scene had come so suddenly upon her that she could not comprehend it. She had an idea the doctor was some madman who had escaped from his keeper; and, too terrified to escape by the door, as in so doing she would have to pass the frenzied man, who, she fancied, had on his first entrance attempted to kill her, she sat in momentary expectation of his again turning to renew his endeavours to murder her.

When Tom spoke she held out her hands, as if begging for the protection her tongue was powerless to ask for.

The sound of Tom's voice seemed to act like a spell on the doctor, who, rushing from the cell, sprang with a leap into one opposite.

Tom was about to follow him, when he was stopped by the girl Fan, who, taking the bunch of keys from where they hung in the cell door, locked the one into which the maniac had fled.

"Leave him there to cool his coppers," said she; "he often, when he has been drinking, smokes with Dick the half of the night. His wife is glad to be rid of him when he is in his tantrums, so she'll go to bed quite contented. Let him cry and leap in there till he's tired. With the door shut nobody'll hear him. He won't be missed till to-morrow, and we have the keys of both the doors and the gate, so we can go off and take the poor woman with us."

As Ethel listened to the girl she became aware that in some unexpected way her liberty was at hand. She snatched her hat and cloak from the pin on the back of the door where they hung, and taking the girl's hand, which Fan held out in a protecting way, she stood while the girl tied on her hat and cloak.

"Have you a home?" asked the girl.

Ethel shook her head.

"Never mind; you'll go with us. Shan't she, Tom?"

"Yes," repeated Tom, in rather a hesitating voice. The young man believed her to be insane, and did not quite relish the idea of having a madwoman for one of those whom he must bring to his father's house until he could find some other place to put them in.

"Where is your bonnet, Fanny? Your head'll be cold. Couldn't I find it?"

"And maybe meet old Mother Grindwood on the way. She never means to let me out of this as long as my hands can iron her caps and collars, or my fingers can sew them. Let her once think I want to go, and my doom's sealed for ever. I'll put my frock over my head. I'm too glad to get off any way. I can easily work for a hat. I have to thank them for teaching me the use of my hands at any rate."

"You'll get a hat without working for it. I'll give you all the hats you'll need as long as I live."

"Loch that cell and come away, Tom," said the girl, in a tone of authority. "While we stand here some of the bulldogs may come on their round. If they catch us we'll blow at a cold coal for getting out."

They now hurried along, the girl going first, and taking Ethel by the hand.

Fanny was also under the impression that Ethel was insane, but she had been accustomed to mix with mad people all her life, and had no dread of the poor, harmless-looking woman who she fancied was melancholy mad.

In a few minutes they had unlocked the house-door, then the gate, and were standing on the outside.

"You must go back, Tom," said Fanny, "and put the keys inside the lock of the house-door. In half an hour perhaps Dick would be round. Hell raise an alarm if he finds the keys away and the door unlocked. They would be after us with the horses, and make the country people believe we are all mad, and would soon be caught and brought back. But," continued she, "if he finds the keys hanging in the door he'll think the doctor has been in his cups, as usual, and forgot to lock the door; and it wouldn't be the first time."

Tom ran up to the house, and they saw him enter the door.

The time seemed terribly long.

"What can keep Tom?" said the girl, in a frightened voice. "What if Dick has met him with the keys? I must run and see what is the matter. Wait here, I'll be back in a moment."

The girl ran off towards the house, and as surely was she inside the gate when it shut with a loud bang!

Tom and the girl inside, Ethel without, the dark sky above, a barren waste around.

As the iron gate shut with a harsh noise Ethel scarcely realized her situation—on a wild common, miles away from the nearest hut or shelter of any kind. She clung cowering to the side of the wall, as if there she had protection from the darkness and the light, driving rain, which was fast soaking through her hat and thin marino cloak.

Moments seemed like hours. She stole quietly to the gate, fearing to make the least noise, as if out there those she dreaded in the house would hear her step, rush out, and drag her back to the life of misery and dread she had lived for the past months—all in which she saw nothing save the walls of her padded cell, its stone flooring, and the open hole at the top of the wall, letting in a dim light from the passage, hearing no sound save the wild cry of the maniacs, not unfrequently made more horrible by the sound of the lash, her food dry bread, moistened by stale water.

She tried to look through by the side of the gate where the hinges hung from the masonry. It was impossible. The iron stanchions were sunk in the side stones so as to preclude the possibility of the unhappy inmates either seeing or being seen.

She then stepped back from the gate, so that she could see part of the wall and upper windows of the house.

She expected all would be buried in darkness, and it was with feelings of the utmost consternation she beheld lights passing from one window to another, as if carried by several persons.

She fancied she had been missed from her cell, and in a few minutes, perhaps, those who were hurrying to and fro in the house would be outside of the gate searching for her on the common.

Fear lent her strength, gave swiftness to her feet, and flying from the dreaded house she ran along in a straight line, not knowing whither she was going, but being careful to make no turning, lest by doing so she might find at daylight she had been going round the house instead of it.

Her strength was quite exhausted, the light rain had been succeeded by driving sleet, and the wind, which when she left the madhouse felt grateful and life-giving, had increased almost to a hurricane. It was blowing the sleet and rain in fierce gusts in her face, making her heart pant with exertion each step she took, and rendering it impossible for her to keep her cloak around her.

Yet she dared not turn aside from its fury, lest she should inadvertently retrace her steps in the darkness.

The night became so dark at last that she was unable to see a yard in advance of herself, and constantly feared she might fall into some chalk-pit, and there lie until the men who she had no doubt were even now on her track would find and seize her.

Still struggling onward in the dark, she was suddenly struck down by coming in contact with something which for the moment stunned and made her insensible, fear making her fancy it must be one of those she was flying from, who dealt her a blow that she might be the more easily captured.

On recovering her consciousness, which had never entirely deserted her, she found that the blow which stunned her had been caused by coming in contact with a wall, at the bottom of which she now lay, protected by it from the wind and rain.

Yet as she was, she was now sheltered from the

biting wind and driving sleet, and she would have gladly remained there for the night, but she knew that she was too near the vicinity of the madhouse, and that ere the morning broke she must try to gain the shelter of some house where the inhabitants would either hide or protect her against her enemies until she could collect her scattered thoughts and decide what was to be done to screen her from the persecutions of Sir Ralph and rescue her child from what she sorely feared was a life of misery.

She remembered the last words Sir Ralph had spoken concerning him.

"He won't lie on a bed of roses till you come back, and the sooner you are in Troylian Castle the better for him."

She raised herself, and, feeling her way by the wall, she came to a corner, and there saw a faint light from a small window.

On looking in she saw the interior of a small, bare-looking kitchen, the light coming from some red embers, the remains of a wood fire in a large, old-fashioned fireplace, where was hung a pot, the steam from which showed distinctly in the dim light.

There was little difficulty in finding the door, which opened almost with a touch.

On the instant a young woman with a baby in her arms came from a room inside.

She started on seeing Ethel, who stood in the doorway, feeling half-afraid to enter.

"Come in," said the woman. "What are you doing so far from houses at this hour of the night?"

The woman had a frank, open face which invited confidence. Ethel was as unsuspecting, as ignorant of the world and always as a child, and in full confidence that she was doing what was best she said:

"I made my escape from a madhouse that is not many miles from this. If you will let me stay here by your fire to-night I will pay you."

"Come this way," said the woman, bringing her into an inner room, where there was a bright fire, and curtains closely shut. "Sit down there and take off your wet clothes. Why were you putting on the system—were you mad?"

Had Ethel replied in the negative the woman would have had grave doubts of her sanity, instead of which she said:

"I would have soon been bad I stayed longer there."

"How did you get out?"

"A girl called Fan was going to run away with one of the keepers—she called him Tom—and they found the doctor in my cell. I think he was mad himself—he was leaping and crying out that a dog and a wolf were tearing him, and the girl locked him into another cell, and they took the keys and brought me out with them."

"Good for him, the cruel old rascal!" said the young woman, laughing. "I'm glad Fanny has got off; she's had a bad time with them wicked folks. Tom is the young lad they got a while ago from Somersethshire."

"I'm afraid they didn't get off," said Ethel. "Tom went back to put the keys in the door after opening the gate. Fanny was afraid if the keys were missed they would find out she and Tom had gone and send after them. He stayed so long that Fanny went back for him, and the instant she entered the gate was shut."

"Oh, they've caught them. Heaven pity them if all I hear is true. If you weren't mad what did they put you in for?"

"My husband's father put me in because I wouldn't marry him."

"Protect us all! Marry your husband's father! Was ever the like heard of? Is your husband dead?"

"His father says he is, but I'm not sure."

Ethel had come to look upon the story Sir Ralph had told her of not being her husband's father, and even the oath he had made her take, as part of his scheme to get her to marry him.

Since she encountered Sir Ralph coming out from the wardrobe she had never ceased thinking of the child's words, so often repeated in the face of all contradiction:

"Yes, mamma, papa did go into the wardrobe, and the beast did put out his head a long time after papa went in."

And as she thought the hope came that there might be some place connected with the wardrobe where her husband still lived, that the body Sir Ralph had said he recognized and would not let her see was part of his scheme, and so her answer to the woman was:

"His father says he is dead, but I am not sure."

The young woman now brought her a plateful of soup thickened with meat, vegetables and bread.

"Eat that," said she. "It will strengthen you. I'll keep you to-night. You can't go out in this storm, and I'll hide you from my husband an' those he'll bring home with him. We're not very far from

Grindwood's place, an' if he came and asked about you Bill would be afraid to deny you to him. He's a wicked man is Grindwood, an' if he took a grudge against Bill he might sweep our hearth! an' you'll have to promise that whatever you hear or see in this house you'll never tell again to nobody."

"I will promise faithfully all you want if you will only let me stay till the morning, and hide me from that terrible man."

"The morning would be the very worst time for you to leave this, but I'll hide you—I've done the like before—and when you tell me where you want to go I'll put you safe on your way, but it'll be to-morrow night before you can leave this house."

The soup made the worn-out, half-starved girl feel as if new strength were given her.

Her clothes were dry, and she was about to give some of her little stock of money to the woman when the latter, starting up, said, in a hurried tone:

"Come with me directly, or you're lost. I hear the sound of horses' feet; they'll be here in a few minutes."

As she spoke she snatched up Ethel's cloak and hat, which she had put up by the fire to dry, and, opening a low door under the staircase that formed the division between two rooms, she pushed Ethel hurriedly inside, whispering, as if fearful of being heard:

"There's two or three old things there ye can lie down on, an' keep yer head to the far side. For Heaven's sake don't move hand or foot, or as sure's ye're there ye'll be in the madhouse again to-morrow, and, what's worse, Bill'll never believe a word I say."

The place into which Ethel crept was a low cupboard under the rickety staircase, so low that she could not sit up in it. It seemed to be the receptacle for old coats, skirts and other rubbish—a sorry place enough for Ethel Anne to lie down in, she had been cradled in lace and fine linen.

The boards had shrunk, and there was no lack of airholes to breathe through, and, worn-out as she was, Ethel stretched her tired limbs, and lay down with whispered words of thanks and renewed promises of secrecy to the young woman.

The door of the cupboard was just shut, and the woman busying herself in arranging new logs upon the fire, when the sound of voices close to the door showed that her preparations for concealing her guest had not been a moment too soon.

"Ye're soon back, Bill," said the young woman, in a hearty, kind voice of welcome, as she opened the door to a fine-looking young man, who kissed her two or three times as he entered.

"Yes, Dolly, I didn't think to be here for an hour, an' we've a precious lot of stuff with us too. What? Toddlums not in bed yet?"

He took the child in his arms, fondling it for a minute as he spoke, and then, giving it to his mother, he gave a low whistle, and setting the door wide open, asked in a half-releas manner:

"Thers's been nobody here since I left?"

"No, faith. I want nobody now; our company days is over for the present. I wish they were come again, for I'm sick an' tired o' this hang-dog life, workin' in the cold an' dark when other men sleep."

"So am I, Bill. I wish to goodness we could cry quits and be off."

The man gave a deep sigh.

"I see little chance. You mind the old saw about touching pitch; I wish old Hendrie had been in Hambrough the night I met him at Headley station."

"I wish he had, but I'm sure you thought no ill o' then, Bill; an' when ye come home that night wi' such a lot of provision, an' we hadn't eat anything all day, an' no' one bit o' bread i' the house for your supper, I'm sure I thought it lucky."

"Faith so did I. A dozen times that night I would ha' stole a loaf if I only had a chance. Thought two or three times of eatlin' an' going off abroad."

"Oh! Bill!"

Dolly spoke these words in a reproachful, frightened tone, as if she feared he might some day really go off and leave her. Better anything than that.

"No, my lass; maybe that's the best thing we could do if we could only both get there, not with the soldiers. But if we was there I would get plenty o' work, an' well paid for it too, an' we might shoot as many hares an' rabbits as we like, an' nobody to say a word. It's mighty hard that the creatures Heaven sends for the food o' man the rich can take but the poor man daren't; no, not if he was starving. The rich make the laws, and the poor have to keep them in this country, and so we've got to break their laws or die of starvation, an' the end o' it is ye've got to swing or fourteen years' penal."

"Oh, Bill, for Heaven's sake don't speak that way."

"But it's true, my lass, that day's sure to come, an' then ye must take Toddlums on yer back an' tramp for a livin', or maybe worse, Dolly," added the man, his handsome eyes flashing with a fierce look as he spoke.

"If ye speak like that, Bill, ye'll make me kill myself," the young woman said, as she clung to her husband's arm.

"Maybe I'll do that afore they take me, Dolly. It would be better for you, an' make my mind—"

He was interrupted by a voice outside, calling out, in a strong Dutch accent:

"Lend a hand here, Bill; I thought your sparkling days was over. I've been watching you both, but I couldn't hear what ye said."

"Ye wouldn't think much on't, if ye did," was the reply, as Bill went outside, returning in a few minutes with the other man, a square-built fellow, whose fair hair and round, red face, as well as his accent, proclaimed his country.

The young man put out the light, and then arranged a piece of carpet over two chairs before the fire, so as to envelope the room in total darkness.

This done the two men rolled in several large barrels and packages, and then shutting the door and window-shutters, opened a trap-door close to the low closet where Ethel lay concealed.

The barrels were carefully rolled in one by one by both men, while Dolly stood over the open trap holding the candle, which she had relit.

This over, they sat down to a supper of the same soup that Ethel had partaken of, together with tea, brandy, lemons, figs and raisins in profusion.

They spoke of what they were to do with the barrels and packages they had stored, Hendrick told rude jokes of how he had deceived the custom-house officers, escaped by a hairbreadth falling into the hands of the preventive-men, laughed loudly himself, and made the others laugh also, until, overpowered by the effects of the brandy he had indulged in, he threw himself on the floor by the fire, and soon gave evidence by his loud snoring of being in the land of dreams.

Ethel slept long and soundly, she was so over-powered by fatigue that the floor in the smugglers' cupboard yielded more merciful repose to her wearied limbs than ever she had before experienced.

When she awoke she could see through the apertures at each side of the shrunk boards forming the sides of her hiding place that the daylight was bright in the little kitchen.

The Dutchman was gone, and Bill sat in front of the fire nursing Toddlums, who was making vain endeavours to possess himself of his father's beard and whiskers.

Every now and then both father and son received a kiss from Dolly as she passed to and fro between the fire and the breakfast-table, while she prepared the morning meal.

A loud rap at the door almost made Ethel scream, in forgetfulness of her own situation, occupied as she was in looking at the pretty picture of the handsome young man and woman fondling their child.

The loud noise at the door startled Dolly also. She looked uneasily in the direction of the low cupboard, and then calling out "Come in," continued her occupation at the breakfast table, spreading slices of bread, butter and meat.

As the door was opened from without she looked up, and in a louder voice than she was wont to speak exclaimed:

"Is that you, Mr. Tikebiter? Isn't that curious? I thought it was you. I knew your rap."

"I should think as you would by this time, Mistress Holler. I allers raps w' this same old chap."

The man—who was the bulldog, Flatnose, from Bethany Asylum—displayed, as he spoke, an immense stick, with the ponderous head of which he was accustomed to make known his presence.

"Come in, Mister Tikebiter, an' take a sup o' tea an' a bit o' breakfast w' us."

Dolly said this in a voice that was meant to be cordial; but it was so evidently forced that her husband turned round, saying to her:

"What are ye afraid for, Dolly, lass? Did ye never see Mister Tikebiter afore?"

"It's no' like I'm afraid when I bid him to his breakfast w' us."

"I'm obligated to ye, Mistress Holler, but I've harder work nor breakfast to attend to now. Un o' our madwomen's escaped last night, and I've got to find her."

"One o' the madwomen escaped!" exclaimed Dolly, in accents of well-feigned surprise.

"Last night!" repeated Bill. "She would na escape far last night i' the storm."

"That's what the mistress and me was thinkin', and so I came to see if she'd taken shelter in your stable, or, mayhap, i' the house."

"Maybe she's i' the stable. I put in the horse late an' she might a-been there an' me no' seen her; but Dolly was alone i' the house, an' she's such a timid thing she shadna let a wee mouse in if she could help it, let alone a madwoman."

"Come, we'll look i' the stable," said Tikebiter. "I ma'an find the 'oman anyhow. The mistress is rampagin' as gin 'twas my blame. Old Grind's the tremens know, an' gin I daans bring her back afore he's about he'll raise a terrible storm."

They went out to the stable, coming back in a few minutes, during which time Dolly took the opportunity to look into the hole where Ethel lay, and say:

"For the love o' Heaven, keep quiet hand and foot o'ye, or Bill'll murder me!"

Ethel signed her perfect understanding of the situation, and the door of the cupboard was again shut before the two men returned from inspecting the stable.

"She's no' there, that's certain," said Tikebiter, sitting down and placing two immense dirty hands on the fat knees which were a foot and a half apart as he sat. "An' I canno' go back till I get her nohow, or there'll be the old 'un to pay, and nothin' to pay him wi'!"

"Maybe she's gone to the railroad," suggested Bill.

"The railroad!" repeated Tikebiter, with a loud sniff of his broad nose. "No, she's a little bit of a girl, she could no' walk half o' that. I had my doubts o' her comin' this far."

"She's a lady, ye see," resumed the bulldog, speaking in a low, gruff voice, "an' no' used to walkin'. Fan and one o' the hands is off too, but we found them at the two-mile-house, an' they would no' come back nor thanks."

"He's a stolid chap, that Tom; an' old mammy that died yesterday told at Fan wasn't Grindwood's, and I'm thinkin' more'n that; at any rate, the mistress keeps her mouth shut about them; but this is another affair."

"Maybe they have the other woman w' them," said Bill.

"No," replied Tikebiter, shaking his head dolorfully. "They did no' ken as how she'd gone. Grind was drunk last night, and in the place o' lockin' the door opened the gate and left the key haugin' i' the door, an' he's i' the tremens, an' the mistress got 'im in the passage at four i' the mornin' wif head a' cut. An' the worst o' that is that the woman's people is to git the doctor a big lot o' money."

"Gin he curse her," suggested Bill, as Tikebiter stopped speaking, fearing he had said too much.

"No' just that, that'll no' be hard to do; but ye see her friends is wantin' her—"

A carriage and pair dashed up to the door of the cottage, and in another moment Sir Ralph Trevylian jumped out, confronting the astonished bulldog and his auditors.

"My man," said he, addressing Bill Holler, "I am Sir Ralph Trevylian, of Trevylian Castle. My daughter, who is insane, took shelter from the storm of last night in your cottage, and I demand that you deliver her up to me at once."

CHAPTER X.

*The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power.* —Shakespeare.

Dolly's face grew pale as ashes. She had once had a poor old man in the house who had made his escape from Grindwood's, but no one came after him except Tikebiter, and the old man got off. But this grand gentleman, who came in a carriage and pair, with his fierce eyes and his determined words that frightened her almost to death, was quite another thing.

Her pale face and troubled look did not escape Sir Ralph's eagle eye. He noted both well, and was sure he was on the right scent.

Bill touched his cap, as he had not removed since coming from the barn, replying, readily:

"This man came on the same errand, but there's no madwoman here."

"There is no use in telling falsehoods, my man," said Sir Ralph, speaking in a cool, determined manner.

He had resolved beforehand not to lose his temper.

"Well, if ye dunno' like to believe us ye can go the stable yersel' an' look for her," exclaimed the man, in a sulky tone.

"No saus, fellow," said Sir Ralph, raising his voice just a little. "I'll search your house first. I have no doubt my daughter will be found, as also barrels of brandy and other articles the queen knows nothing o'."

Bill's face and brow flushed crimson, while Dolly sank in a chair almost faint with fright. The husband and wife both knew that the former's liberty, perhaps his life, was in this stern-looking man's hands.

"Ye're welcome to search my house if ye like, but

ye'll no' find much for yer pains; there's hardly room for a mouse to hide, far less a madwoman," Bill replied, in tones somewhat more deferential than those he had first used.

Poor Ethel in her hiding-place shivered with apprehension. In imagination she saw herself dragged forth, and again consigned to the dark, padded cell, with the added horrors she knew were in store for her when Grindwood had recovered from his own mad fit sufficiently to chain her limbs down to the floor with those terrible irons, and use the lash he had cracked so close to her face as to make her scream with fear—a piercing shriek which only he could hear, and the padded walls were powerless to echo.

Sir Ralph walked through both rooms, examining each cupboard, looking under tables and the bed, and into places where a child could scarcely crawl, the poor girl he sought following his footsteps with a quirk ear, and looking with terror through the cracks in the wall, her heart almost bursting with fear each time he approached her hiding-place.

She drew herself close under the steps of the staircase, drawing up her feet and covering herself with one of the old skirts, while doing so trembling with the consciousness that all her efforts were fruitless.

Sir Ralph twice passed by the low cupboard without noticing it, then he went up the rickety staircase to the garret, each footstep he took above Ethel's head striking terror into her heart.

When he had completed his search of the rooms and the garret he seemed to be quite nonplussed. Dolly's frightened look had, he thought, told him that Ethel was there, and now he had searched every nook and cranny, and she was not to be found. He thought it likely that the contraband goods he had heard of from the doctor's wife were in the stable, but it was very unlikely Ethel would be there.

"Now, my good tallow," said he to Bill, "I'll tell you what. I'll give you twenty pounds if you find this lady for me, and if you don't in an hour hence I'll let the custom-house officers know the kind of things you keep here."

"If I knew anything about the lady I'd tell ye without twenty pounds. This man knows I helped him to look for her, but I can't do what can't be done. An' for anything I have to make my living of, it would be too bad if a gentleman like you would dirty your fingers by turning informer."

The man spoke in a subdued manner, but the flash in his dark, handsome eyes was as fierce as that in Sir Ralph's gray orbs, only the latter spoke of rancour implacable, the former of passion.

"Find my daughter and your fortune is made, conceal or help to conceal her and you're a gone man. It won't give me much trouble to find you out. A month hence you'll have your board and lodgings at the queen's expense for fourteen years and your wife a beggar."

Bill thought of his own words of the evening before—their realization had come quickly.

Ethel shuddered. She knew the man who threatened the poor peasant was able to do him to death without a single feeling of remorse.

"You see well enough that I've no place to hide any one in, an' if I had I wouldn't keep your daughter from you. Who would care for her like her father?"

Her husband's words struck with a strong meaning on Dolly's ears. Her own father had been an over-indulgent one. It was possible the girl was a little crazy and had imagined what she had said about her husband's father wishing to marry her.

"Perhaps," she thought, "it would be best to tell Bill, and let him do what he thinks best."

In crossing the little kitchen to where her husband stood by the window she encountered Sir Ralph's eyes fixed upon her with such a look of malicious ferocity as made her heart quail.

She sought her husband's side for protection. Her heart told her that the man whose eyes seemed to wither her every energy was destined to be the harbinger of evil to her and hers, that he would crush all the comfort out of her life; yet this very conviction made her feel that she could not give up to this man the poor, hunted girl who had thrown herself on her mercy.

Each time Sir Ralph looked in Dolly's face he saw there the frightened look of one who has something to conceal. Her colour came and went; she could not look in his eye, not for a moment.

Again he was strengthened in the conviction that Ethel was hidden by this woman, and again he went into the bedroom, this time calling to Tikebiter to assist him in his search.

The latter threw the bedclothes on the floor, the straw bed followed, but all was useless.

"Not a bit of her there, body or bones," said Tikebiter, with a lugubrious expression of face almost laughable. "By golly, if she don't turn up there'll

be a row. Grind 'll kill us all. There'll be the old un to pay, an' nothin' to pay him wi'."

At another time Sir Ralph would have been highly indignant at Tikebiter's familiarity in daring to speak in his presence, but now he was too much occupied to stick at such trifles.

On returning to the kitchen a cry of almost joy escaped from the lips of both knight and bulldog; they had simultaneously discovered the door of the low cupboard under the staircase.

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Dick, "here's the trap; we'll unearth the quarry pretty soon now."

"How stupid not to see that before," said Sir Ralph. "Here she is. The place is so confounded dark it was hardly possible to see it, and the fox and his wife were chuckling with delight over their success."

Ethel listened to these terrible words with a heart beating in almost audible throbs. If the means of self-destruction had been hers, that instant the living being would have become a cold and bleeding piece of clay. Death in any shape would have been welcomed rather than again fall into the hands of her fiendish father-in-law and his brutal companion, whose voice she now recognized as the one of all others in the madhouse which made her quake and quail.

Attracted by their words, Bill came forward to see what they meant. He never thought of the wood-hole, as they used to call it, and could not comprehend what their words implied. They were searching for the fastening which they could not find, looking for it at the side instead of the top of the bar.

"Wait, I'll open it for you," said Bill. "But I'm afraid ye'll no' get much more'n old coats and petticoats here. I'll no' get my twenty pounds this twist."

Dolly carried her child outside; she would have fainted in the house. She could not bear the shrieks she knew would come when the poor, hunted thing was dragged out of her hiding-place.

The bar required all the force of the young man's wrist to open it. Dolly, in eagerness for the safety of the poor, wandering thing, had shut it the second time with all her might.

"There it is, at last," said Bill, as he pulled open the door with a jerk, rasping the floor with a dull noise. "I dunno' think it's been opened since the old man died. His clothes is in there."

"Pull them out here," Sir Ralph called out, in a commanding tone of voice to Tikebiter, "clothes and woman together."

Now the bulldog, who was on his knees in front of the hole formed by the opening of the door, recollecting that old Holler had died of cholera, and he inwardly anatomised the whole lot of the Hollers for keeping cholera clothes, instead of burning them according to law.

And, pulling out first one pair of trousers, and then a second, and lastly a coat, he became really faint from apprehension; declaring that there were no more confounded cholera clothes there, and that he was nearly killed with the smell, he got up and fled to the door, exclaiming, in loud, angry tones, to Dolly:

"What made you keep the old sinner's cholera clothes in the wood-hole? Faith, if I take the cholera, I'll make ye pay salt and dear for 't. It's clear again the law."

Dolly gazed in amazement at the man, not comprehending a word he said.

On the bulldog's taking flight Sir Ralph stooped down and gave a glance into the cupboard. Tikebiter's words had their due effect on him. He valued life more than most men, and did not care to risk pulling out the rest of the clothes which he fancied he saw farther inside the hole.

As to Ethel's being concealed there, seeing the place in the half-dark, he fancied from its size that was impossible.

In stooping down he partly lost his balance, falling on one knee among the dreaded clothes which the bulldog had dislodged from their resting-place.

Sir Ralph started with horror as he came in contact with the clothes. The woody smell of the closet reminded him of a coffin, and the transition to a cholera coffin was easy. He execrated Ethel, the peasants, cholera clothes and all in one breath.

Getting up and flying from the house almost as quickly as Tikebiter had done, the next moment he was inside the carriage which brought him to the cottage. Desiring the coachman to drive to the asylum, he threw himself back on the cushions, exclaiming:

"Wherever she is, she's not there. If Grindwood don't find her by to-morrow night, I'll make him suffer body and bones, letting his patients wander about in this way."

He did not ask himself how this was to be done,

r how he was to account for having put a sane woman under Grindwood's roof.

"The old idiot," muttered he to himself, "how dare she send me to that infernal place where I may have got my death? The man was right when he said they had no place to secrete a mouse, far less a woman."

Tikebiter followed Sir Ralph's carriage with long strides, inwardly chafing at his hard fate—the inexorable fate which had made him prefer fighting with the smaller boys at school instead of learning his lessons, which had at fourteen made him break the leg and arm of a child of five, and so be turned out of school. The same hard fate made him, when a butcher's apprentice, belabour the cattle he was sent for so as to make the half of their flesh unfit for market. And so in his subsequent career, continually dismissed on account of cruelty, until he found out Grindwood's, where that quality was his highest recommendation.

"I never had a chance," soliloquized he. "Allers meetin' wi' scoldin', fussy folks, an' now I'm in trouble in this queer old hole o' a madhouse. I'd leave to-morrow, only I've got no other place to go to, an' Grindwood's pay's so bad that a chap can only get his clothes and his drink out o'it."

Bill Holler got his breakfast nearer noon than morning, and then left the cottage that he might try to dispose of his dangerous goods in the neighbouring town.

When darkness came again, and the busy world had gone to rest, he would then have to retrace his steps and deliver the goods he dare not show or his customers receive in the daylight.

It was almost one o'clock in the afternoon before Dolly dared to speak to the poor prisoner in the wood-hole, into which she had hurriedly stuffed the old clothes the moment Sir Ralph left, in mortal terror lest Bill would do so himself, and so find out that the woman Sir Ralph Trevylian had sought so persistently was there all the time.

The tempest, which had lulled during the morning and forenoon, was now raging again in full fury, the sleet pelting against the windows of the cabin, the wind tearing and roaring round the walls as if they were the focus on which the spirit of the storm was venting his fury.

Before opening the low cupboard Dolly went to each of the windows, looking auxiliously in all directions lest some one else was abroad in search of the poor madwoman whom she now feared Ethel really was.

No creature was to be seen in any direction, only the wide waste of wet, barren moorland. This was just as Dolly would have it.

"Come out!" said the young woman, speaking in a soft, low voice, as if she feared to be heard. "Come out and get some breakfast. I'm sure you're nearly dead with hunger and fear. I thought you were caught once, an' I don't know how they missed you."

"I hardly know myself. I saw my wicked father-in-law's face as clearly as I see yours when he looked in after the keeper went away."

"You see it was lighter out at the door than in below the stairs where you lay. It was a mercy you thought of lying back there."

The two young women, Ethel, daughter of Lord John Annesley, and Dolly, daughter of Robert Turpin, the woodman, sat at table together in earnest and serious converse, the earl's daughter telling her troubles to the lowly woman as freely as she would to one of her own rank.

There is a power in truth, be it told in castle or cottage, and long ere their converse was ended Dolly was sure that Ethel was as sane as herself, and that she was sought as a prey by the fierce-looking man who had searched the cottage for her in the morning.

They arranged Ethel's plans for the future with all the wisdom the two young, inexperienced women were capable of.

The plans were well laid had everything happened as they expected, but, alas! the very first step was one into the deep mire.

(To be continued.)

KING KAKAMBU of the Fiji Islands, has sent to the Queen his favourite war-club, ornamented with emblems of peace, accompanied by a dutiful message confirming the interests of his people unreservedly to the justice and generosity of Her Majesty.

HOW TO KEEP A SITUATION.—Be ready to throw in an odd half-hour or an hour's time, when it will be an accommodation, and don't seem to make it a merit. Do it heartily. Though not a word be said your employer will make a note of it. Make yourself indispensable to him, and he will lose many of the opposite kind before he will part with you. Those young men who watch the clock to see the very second their working hour is up—who leave, no

matter what state the work may be in, at precisely the instant—who calculate the exact amount they can shirk without being reproved—who are lavish of their employer's goods—will always be the first to receive notice, when times are dull, that their services are no longer required.

THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARRA; OR, THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ABOUT midday Winstanley came again and beckoned Aileen out, dismay on his face.

"There is a man in the salon," said he, "who says his master's wife must be here; and he describes you."

"Ah, that's his valet!" returned Aileen, crimsoning. "I forgot all about Rochester ever since I found her."

She preceded Lord John quickly to the room where the trusty valet was being fiercely interrogated by Sherrard.

"Why do you speak of me as Mr. Rochester's wife?" said Aileen, very majestically. "You know I am not his wife, and refused to be so. Go back and tell your master that I have found my friends and cannot of course return to him."

"And give him that card," added Captain Sherrard, flinging one on the table, "and say the owner of it is coming after it to give him a horse-whipping."

"In the absence of this lady's brother, who is at present asleep," spoke up Lord John, "I think it my duty to warn Mr. Rochester that he will be prosecuted for the abduction of Miss Guillamore."

"Madam," said the valet, taking no notice of these addresses, "Mr. Rochester is in the wildest anxiety about you. He missed you two hours ago and has tried twice to rise and search for you. Madam, Mr. Rochester is dying."

"Dying?" ejaculated Aileen, turning very pale. Her heart smote her to the quick.

The gentlemen looked astounded.

"Wait a moment," said the girl, "I must go to him."

"You'll stay where ye are," said Sherrard, quickly recovering himself. "I'll be bound that's all bosh."

"No, no," returned Aileen, "it is too true. I have killed him."

She burst into tears and left the salon.

A few minutes she returned, dressed in one of Vara's hats and a shawl (of course she had found long ere this a more suitable costume than her somnambulistic attire).

"Come," said she. "Fortunately, my sister is sleeping, and the doctor is beside her. Come, quickly—he may be gone."

"Not alone," remarked Lord John, quietly.

"Sherrard and I must accompany you. It is but reasonable that we should distrust this man."

The valet's impassive face quivered, but he said nothing.

They crossed the road and entered the inn.

Pushing them into a parlour the valet said, in a low voice, pointing to the half-open door of a bed-chamber:

"Gentlemen, he lies there. In common humanity, allow the lady to see him alone. He is beyond your vengeance."

They did not comply until they had ascertained by careful examination that there was no second door to the bedroom, and that there really was a sick man lying in bed with the innkeeper's wife standing fanning him.

Then Sherrard let go his hold of Aileen, and she almost ran to the bedside of her enemy.

Rochester was lying with his hollow eyes closed, and a burning fever-spot in the centre of each gaunt cheek; and there was a great, an awful change upon the face she had never loved which caused the little white lady to sob outright the instant her eyes fell upon him.

At that he started—looked up—and a blaze of joy overspread his countenance.

"Where are you, Aileen—little Aileen?" panted he, huskily. "You've almost broken my heart—I thought you had deserted me."

Madame Lefranc came out of the sick room, her apron to her eyes.

"How the hapless monsieur adores madame!" she ejaculated.

"I did not know you were worse," wept Aileen. "You seemed so well lately."

"Yes—the last flicker of the candle! I'll never mete out vengeance to Madame Blaze now. I've slain myself."

"Yes, and by my hand!" said Aileen, weeping bitterly.

"No—not by your hand," said the sick man, vehe-

mently. "Never grieve over that! You did right, poor little girl! You were right; And it was nothing at first; I brought this on myself!"

Aileen could not find it in her heart to break the news to him which she feared would kill him outright.

He had won her by force, and was keeping her against her will, but if there was a pure vein in his nature Aileen had touched it. He loved her so deeply and so mournfully (for love which is not returned is but a sorrowful thing), that he would willingly have died to hear her say she was his wife.

Presently he noticed something strange about her appearance.

He asked, nervously:

"Where have you been, Aileen? Why is there such a light in your eyes, even while you are weeping for me? Why are you dressed in these strange clothes?"

So she gathered up courage, and gently, kindly, broke her tidings to him, showing no heartless joy, but, on the contrary, expressing all the sympathy she could get her heart to feel for him.

In stricken amazement he heard her, tears standing in his hollow eyes; then burst out passionately, with a groan of despair:

"And is this the end of all? Can you leave me to die, cruel Aileen? Have you no pity—no pity for me?"

He seized her hand and covered it with miserable kisses, then, feeling the whole force of the situation in one stunning blow, he cast it from him, turned his white face to the wall, and said no more.

Aileen returned to her two protectors, who had heard all, with her eyes red with weeping. The valet was waiting most anxiously on the outer balcony for the result of the interview. She stepped out to him and said:

"I would willingly stay with Mr. Rochester until the last, for I fear he is really dying, but my sister is also dangerously ill, and my duty takes me to her bedside. You had better telegraph at once for Zoland, so that she can be here to-morrow."

"And madam is going to leave her husband to the care of a servant?" interrogated the valet, respectfully but firmly.

She looked at him steadily while she answered:

"You have been faithful ally of your master throughout, but you will find he no longer wishes this deception to be kept up. I never was your master's wife, even by marriage, and the only woman who ever should have been his wife is Zoland."

Having thus silenced him, she left him. And the valet took her advice, and so immortal a thing is a woman's love that Zoland answered the summons in flying haste, and taking her place by the dying pillow of the man who had wronged her beyond all hope of mortal forgiveness, except a woman's, she brightened the Dark Valley by her devotion.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE "Dying Confession of Christabel Snowe," which the murderer had put in Vara's hands, to be found by the first discoverer of her dead body, was an actual record of all the sins of Madame Blaze, purported to have been written just before she committed suicide; and the suicide, she declared, was decided on from shame and remorse at her past life.

The papers which she scattered over the bed just before leaving the room were letters from many of her victims in past times, private papers relative to rascally business done for unscrupulous employers, sinister notes, written in cypher, and signed "Christabel," which contained hints of poisoning, pilfering, or dabblings in political tricks, and a photograph of Vara, taken apparently by an artist in Vienna, with the words "Christabel Snowe" written beneath it.

It was now quite evident what had been Madame Blaze's scheme in playing the "Good Samaritan" to the friendless girl.

She had given her a name which was notorious throughout all Europe; she had so loaded her with benefits that when the time came to cut her off from all who knew her Vara should be ready to go; she had got her victim to make that resolution in such haste that she should leave no trace behind her, then, having scattered around her the proofs of sin, put a "confession" in her hands and left her to carry into her dishonoured grave the obloquy of the living Christabel Snows.

But there was still another page in this infamous record of crime. The adventuress having, as it were, buried herself with all her disgrace on her back, must have planned a new and brilliant career for herself and her guilty husband. She must be even now reigning in unsullied splendour with her ill-gotten gains of the past ten years to back her; and where?

Tracing back the story of the Sweet Sisters, and the story of Kenelm, and the story of Shane and Katy, and the fate of Denis—all Guillarmores—all presumably

driven away and banished or dead, the irresistible conviction seizes one that the clever Madame Blaze is now snugly ensconced in Clairmarais, as the châtelaine, the sole legatee of Graciedieu.

For this end, to be helped to it by Vara's signature to an innocent-looking will—Vara, the last Guillamore known to be living or within reach, for this end had the arch-plottor worked with heart, hand, money, brains and skill.

Her army of agents had doubtless kept all parts of her complicated machinery working while she intrigued like a second Wolsey.

She had sent one agent (her husband) to murder Denis Guillamore as he was about arriving home with the good news of the sisters' heirship.

She had sent a second agent (Geoffrey Rochester) to steal away one sister, marry her forcibly, and be rewarded with the promise of a fortune to keep her out of the way.

She had sent a third (De St. Cyr) to attach himself to Kenelm, the brother, and by slow and imperceptible poisoning to sap away his life without arousing public comment.

She had herself taken the other sister, and by a steady system which even the victim herself should never suspect she had stolen the life drop by drop from her veins, first by causing her to sleep in a chamber hung with curtains saturated with Paris green and after that by filling it with hyacinths of every species, a plant which few people are aware to be a deadly poison when inhaled by night.

She had sent an agent (again her husband) to stir up the secret society at Balleygreen against Shane and Kathleen Guillamore, so that they should burn the hut and the owners in it. Foiled by the brother and sister's unaccountable escape, Katy had been torn from Shane's side on board ship and sent to gaol, to be lost sight of strangely enough when Frank Armar had taken her home to his mother. Shane had jumped overboard.

An agent (again Captain Blaze) had gone to Clairmarais reeking from the murder of Denis and the razing of Shane's hut, to murder the old French steward and put one of the plotter's gang in his place.

Mademoiselle de Fleury's story revealed this last coup.

But all had not gone as smoothly as had been planned. There had been weak places bridged over, and the bridges had broken, hence the demolition of the plan.

Kenelm Guillamore, when first seen (at the opera) had turned out to be the one man she had ever loved; also, he had found his sister. These were weak places in the plan.

She had shut the doomed one out of her heart (if one so crafty, so ruthless, so treacherous, so hypocritical, could be said to have a heart) and had beguiled him with exhaustless dissimulations, even while she saw the death-look in his face in that last interview when she leaned upon his breast, with quivering lips and wild tears raining from her eyes.

Why had she arranged so extensive and elaborate a parting scene to be closed by such a monstrous and romantic falsehood?

The close of the plot had been hastened on with frightful rapidity. Vara recalled with curling horror that recent scene in Mrs. St. Columb's drawing-room when she had discovered that the Marquis of Winstanley loved her, how the woman had stood playing with the solitaire board with such a horrible earnestness!

She had muttered as she finished the game: "Two;" and precisely two weeks from that night Vara, the last of the Guillarmores, lay stricken with death!

Why had she seemed so astounded by the discovery of Winstanley's bestowal of affection? Was there a plot within a plot, and was Winstanley the man she intended to marry? And was she projecting a future day, when the lovely and amiable Châtelaine of Clairmarais should enter the English peerage as the Marchioness of Winstanley?

Quite possible; and in her immeasurable egotism she must have forgotten that the lovely girl beside her might win the love of her prize.

This was another weak part in the plotting.

The meeting and banding together of the Guillarmores, in spite of the endeavours of her agents, of course did sad havoc with madame's plans, but there is little doubt that she would have triumphantly carried the day had not the mystic influence which existed between the two sisters drawn them together in time to arrest death's hand mid-stroke.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE Château of Graciedieu, the baronial residence of the ancient family of Clairmarais, is in the south of France, not far from the confines of Italy, and in sight of the Mediterranean.

For miles before you approach it you are driven

in an old-fashioned diligence through a magnificent stretch of pine forest which might rival many in our colder land.

Suddenly these solemn arcades cease, and a valley of bewitching verdure bursts upon you, a battlemented château upon a gentle eminence, half shrouded by light foliage, and the quaint cottages of Blossac clustering round its base.

In this sunny vale, the orange, the olive, the palm, and the vine flourish with Southern luxuriance, and the climate is balmy and warm even in winter.

A close carriage drove through the crooked streets of Blossac one morning in early spring. The horses were bold and reeking, the coach was dusty, and still the red-vested driver cracked his long whip and urged the panting animals to greater speed.

They stopped before the red-tiled village inn, over the wide open door of which swung a great sign bearing the words, "Le Clairmarais."

The proprietors hastened out, madame the hostess in her wooden shoes and vast white cap, occupying the doorway; monsieur the host obsequiously bowing to the ground before the carriage windows.

When had travellers stopped before at "Le Clairmarais"?

Two gentlemen stepped out of the coach, and allowed themselves to be ushered into the house by the delighted pair, who overwhelmed them with questions.

"Had messieurs travelled far? Would they dine? Would they taste the wine of 'Le Clairmarais'? Chambertin, or Chablis, or perhaps Medoc—in England one prefers a heavy wine—but all so excellent, so pure!"

The gentlemen took a bottle of wine, and while drinking one of them asked:

"Who is the proprietor of that fine château?" pointing through the door at the leaf-draped villa, whose round turrets and ornate roof peeped forth.

Instant excitement. A torrent of speculations and information. Madame, the hostess, came to the front, her brawny hands on her hips, her bead-black eyes sparkling.

"Madame, the proprietress, is an English lady; ah, so beautiful, so rich! They say she puts on a new dress every day, and has a ring for every finger. Ah! she will take the grass off the Blossac streets! Her visitors will doubtless be without number, when the season advances. Jacques must pull down the old inn and put up a larger one—"

"What is the lady's name?"

"Ah, and that is the strange thing. Perhaps monsieur would like to hear the story? Clairmarais has been empty ever since the old baron died, until a week ago, when this lady arrived with a will from the last heir, naming her as sole legatee—Madame St. Columb."

A pale face looked into an healthy one; the two gentlemen exchanged glances of stern import. The hostess continued:

"The will has been found by the managers of the estate to be correct, and madame was instantly put in possession. It is a pity Graciedieu has passed out of the hands of the Clairmarais, but madame is going to be a great lady; she is going to make a palace of the château; and she has already been through all the village, and taken all hearts. She is a believer in the true faith, too, and the heirs, who were named Guillarmores, were all heretics, so it is well. But are the messieurs going? Is milord not going to dine? No?"

"We may return shortly to dine," said the gentlemen, seating themselves once more in the carriage.

It moved on, in a cloud of dust, and as the pair watched it from the grassy yard they saw it, to their amazement, enter the great iron gates of Clairmarais!

(To be continued.)

WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN the news of Charles Ruhl's arrest reached Wylde Hall John Hopetown, as its present master insisted upon styling himself, was startled into something like grave alarm for his own safety.

"This means something more than mere suspicion," he had mused. "Ah, the storm is brewing, my friend Charles, clouds are rising in the horizon. How goes our ship now? I fancy I shall have to be pilot after all. Well, well, we might have expected these shoals of quicksand and breakers, as well as adverse winds and strong currents that bear the best-managed craft on to its fate-predestined goal. But I must not let you sink; I willingly embarked in the perilous voyage with you and we will stand or fall together."

It was not often that he was given to meditations of this figurative style. There was plenty for him to do, never till now had he known the immense amount of correspondence a lawsuit entails, besides

THE LONDON READER.

having to see any number of lawyers' clerks and private-inquiry agents and the rest of it.

That he meant to support his claim was pretty evident to everybody, and like others in such cases he had as many sympathizers as had Frank.

The more simple-hearted and ingenuous of mankind—maiden ladies and untutored yokels in particular—looked upon him as a martyr. They could not conceive it to be possible that any man could be guilty of so gigantic a fraud, that any man could have the hardness to personate the dead, as it was reported he was doing, without being at once found out and punished.

There were some sympathizers and believers in the purity and goodness of human nature who were not sparing in their fancy epithets against Francis Craythorpe Hopetown and his friends.

Those of the class cautious and non-opinion-giving would not take the part of one or the other.

"He is somebody who knows a thing or two about the family and the family's friends. He is no stranger. If he isn't the right one he's a relation of some kind, and must be a good deal like the lost heir too."

That was the belief of the last-mentioned class, and perhaps they were the most unprejudiced and most correct of any.

John Hopetown took active measures to help his friend. He offered bail, and, in the event of not being able to get him liberated until the first hearing of the charge against him, instructed his solicitors to procure a good bailer or two, and for whom he secretly lodged the money most likely to be necessary.

With feverish impatience he waited for the day to come when he should have his friend freed. To go up to London was his first impulse.

"But then," he thought, "if Charles is liberated he is sure to come down to me with all possible speed. I had better stay here."

And so he stayed, giving instructions that an evening paper was to be brought to him as soon as one could be procured. This may have been sooth-ing to his anxious feelings, but it did not show a great amount of forethought or knowledge of time and space and the activity or punctuality of railway officials, as was soon demonstrated.

Before a copy of the first edition of the "Cackler," could reach Wylde Hall Charles Ruhl was there in person.

The distressing parting with Amy had wrought a greater change in Ruhl than his temporary imprisonment.

The first was a lasting impression. Her white, agonized face was terribly, visibly portrayed on his mental vision, and the tiny, plump hands which had clung so imploringly round his neck now were tugging at his heart and wringing from it drops of agony, sorrow and remorse.

It made his step heavy, his face a leaden colour, and his eyes looked wild and ghastly.

"Charles," said John, "thank Heaven you are safe! Cheer up and welcome a stout heart."

A curiously wan smile flitted over Ruhl's pale face, the old slow smile made weary.

"Safe for how long?" he said, and John noticed that the clear ring of his voice was gone.

"For aye, as our kilted brethren say," smiled John. "Apropos, I have not yet seen an account of the affair. I felt interested."

"Congreve—Brin—"

"Hush—quiet! Good Heavens! has that paltry affair turned your brains and softened them?" said the master of the hall, turning blood-red and then to the hue of death. "Walls have ears!"

Ruhl shook his head.

"I spoke lowly," he said, "and I meant nothing. In the midst of the great danger that is around us it sounds so natural and comes so natural to me to call you by the old, familiar and pleasant name after all."

"All right, old fellow. Don't forget yourself in public. I'll be Brin to you, but only in privacy."

"Don't banter—you do not know yet to what extent the terrible truth has leaked out. Brin, dear old friend, our barque is wrecked; the game is up; we must see what can be done to save ourselves. But bring me some wine; let us get nerve. We must fight for our lives now, for the very elements of earth and the judgment of Heaven are against us."

The terrible earnestness of Ruhl's manner, the despairing glance, the apprehensive gesture implying the magnitude of their trials, of their utter desolation from kith or kin, sobered the daring personator of John Hopetown, and he changed as if care had dropped a shadowy veil over him.

He turned away and striding over to the fireplace rang for the servant to bring wine. Both men were silent until the servant returned, and he brought with him the evening paper.

While Congreve—the reader knows it is Congreve, let him therefore keep his name—was mixing grog for himself and uncorking wine for Ruhl Charles opened the paper and hunted out the report of his own examination.

He soon found it under a substantial heading. Nothing of its terrible interest was lost in the reported abridgement, and the particulars were forcibly set forth,

"Is it there?" asked Brinsley, handing a glass of wine.

"Yes, thanks. Will you read it?"
Congreve took the paper. His face changed as he read the account, and when he had finished he dashed the paper down and turned almost fiercely upon his friend.

"Ruhl," he said, "you have undone me! Why did you keep that accursed letter and those clothes?"

"A morbid infatuation, I suppose; the fiend's prompting."

"What else?"
Frankly, Brin, I kept them lest you might turn upon me, might wish to kick me off when your purpose was served, and leave me in the cold."

"To hold in terror over me should I have not kept to my sworn compact?"
"Yes."

"How little you knew me, Charles. But I did keep my compact; why did you not destroy them then?"
"I was going home to Kennington to do it when I was arrested. Man proposes—"

"Ay, ay. This is worse than I ever dreamt of."
"Then you see that what I said is correct. We are baffled, our ship is wrecked, Brin. We can afford to leave the money for my princess. Let us do so and get away."

"No—by Heaven, no!" said Brinsley Congreve, "I will not give in!"
"Then we must perish. With poor John Hopetown's letter to his friends, the clothes and the children of Edward Temple against us we should never leave the Court again only to be led to prison."

Congreve burst into a loud and mocking laugh.
"Bah! the evidence of Edward Temple—"

"Don't mislead yourself. You say you met him twice—once with Amy, once with Ellen?"
"Well?"

"Accidentally?"
"What else could it have been?"
"Danger. A well-laid trap, Brin—those girls both recognized you."

"As whom?"
"John Hartpool, the visitor and friend I took to their mother's house."

Brinsley Congreve's hand tightened on his glass and his face hardened.

"Ay," he said, "I had forgotten that. How shallow after all were our deepest schemes."

"The girl's evidence," continued Ruhl, "is not the worst of it. Do you remember the scars described on John Hopetown's body under the line of marks on person?"

"Can I forget it?" replied Brinsley, with a shiver.

"Well then, Edward Temple met John Hopetown, was with him when he received the wound that left one of those scars. By this time he has sent out detectives to hunt up his friends who can also swear to that, and by which they can identify John Hopetown."

"Ay, there is a stronger, higher avenging hand than man's in this, Ruhl. We are lost; but we dare not attempt to give in yet. Apparently we must fight the battle, must be seen about, and then when the opportunity presents itself escape, if it comes to the worst."

"To the trial and penal servitude?"
"Death rather!"

And Congreve, the luckless, thriftless waif on the world's tide, meant it.

"So be it," said Ruhl, sadly. And then with a gush of tears starting from his hot, bloodshot eyes, he burst forth, passionately: "Oh, Heaven, what have I to live for now! She gone—and Amy—poor, poor child—oh, death! death, be merciful and take me from this grim world of broken hopes, disappointed, blighted love, and dreary, burdensome life. Take back, oh, Heaven! the vital spark thou gavest me. Oh, that one destined as I should ever have seen the light!"

"Charles—Charles, old fellow," cried Brinsley, and taking Ruhl to him as he would a brother—a man's pity in such a case is ever sincere, "hush. In time to come, when this dreadful nightmare becomes a mere shadowy dream of the past, a memory, we may find something to live for; greater sinners than we have called their sins necessities, and mercy has been accorded them from above. Wait till we are away from this land, and then—"

Only a great upheaving of the broad chest and a sob that came like a wail from his tortured soul. But death had no mercy for him yet.

Fate is against us. Here is another case of virtue rewarded."

The man-servant at Wylde Hall had just brought

in the evening paper and Congreve had just read the case of Hopetown v. Hopetown in the Court of Probate.

Ruhl lifted his head wearily from his hand and glanced listlessly at his friend.

"What is it now?"
"Mrs. Hopetown has lost the day, and a codicil to Hopetown's will, only just come to light in the form of a sealed packet, revokes in full the legacy bequeathed to Marcus and takes away one-half of the annuity bequeathed to the widow."

"Why should they not suffer too?" said Ruhl.

"It must have been a thunderbolt for them, and it works with the rest to our end."

"What end?"
"That we must get away."

Charles Ruhl smiled his wan smile.
"I have a presentiment," he said, "that we shall not escape retribution. It will follow us, Brin. The end of the chapter is not far off. Are there any letters for me?"

"One, I think."

"Thanks. I told the solicitor to forward any that should reach him on to me."

"And—this is strange, Charles! It bears the post-mark of my poor mother's home. Bad news, I suppose. Heaven, how it follows a man! Heaven help the luckless! Read it."

Ruhl broke the seal and read the letter silently. When he had done he gave it to Brinsley, who in silence also read it.

The letter was from the trustee managing Congreve's little estate, a somewhat long and painful letter; every passage in it was a dagger-thrust to Brinsley, every line a heart pang, and he sank back with a groan of agony when the letter was finished.

His mother was dead, but what a death! By dint of careful treatment and the skilful attention of the physicians, she regained some of her mental capacity, at first only by fits and starts, sometimes remaining sane for two or three days.

Later on she improved, and a few months after the epitaph was written on Brinsley Congreve his mother was so much out of danger that the physicians felt justified in pronouncing her permanently cured.

She remembered much of the past, remembered the condition she was left in at her husband's death, began to see after her own affairs, and, above all, to ask for her son, Brinsley. The evasions she met with, the very attempts to conceal the truth from her, only made her more persistent in her inquiries.

The truth leaked out one day. A lady friend called upon her to congratulate her upon her recovery, and, in the course of conversation, mentioned the sad fate of her son.

Mrs. Congreve was all attention, asked for particulars, and got from the lady a full account of the supposed suicide. She never spoke after that. A thrilling shriek, that rang through the house, and lived long after in the ears of those who heard it, told how the tidings had affected her. Her reason had gone again, and she died raving mad.

"And I," said Brinsley, when he had read the letter, "was the cause of her dreadful death. Heaven, forgive me!"

This letter preyed dreadfully upon his mind. He had no thought nor care for himself now. But Ruhl was determined not to die in chains. His friend's very despair served to renovate his energy, and, while Congreve was gone to write a letter, Charles began active operations for flight.

Money and jewels were packed in a strong case and addressed to an agent at Mexico. The servant had orders to send this and other packets on the morrow. The servant promised to obey.

They had long since agreed that if they attempted flight to take nothing with them beyond what they wore; to leave the house as if they intended taking a walk.

When Congreve came back to Ruhl he found him dressed to go out.

"Brin, are you ready?"
"Ready for what?"

"To leave here for ever. Come, to stay longer is only courting danger. You have nothing to do now?"

"Nothing. All the money I dare touch is in another name. I am ready; I care not what becomes of me. Take me where you will."

There was no longer any opposition, no wish to meet the trial and bear out the claim. These two men who had fought so daringly for a fortune not their own were cowed now that retribution had come upon them in a way that made them feel the solemn, awe-inspiring conviction that it came from a higher hand than that of mortal.

Their sole thought and purpose now was to get away from the shadow of the awful prison. Though each that had fought and hazarded his life for was gone, snatched from their grasp, they clung to life and to liberty.

Better by far to be a wandering exile or labourer, toiling, slaving every waking hour for daily bread, enjoying the sweetness of existence, than to be a martyred king, or an imprisoned patriot, or poet starving now for the future fame. Better bread and existence than death and a stone.

When these two unhappy young men left Wyld Hall they rambled on towards the railway station. Ruhl had made up his mind to go to London; Congreve had shaved his beard off, leaving only a moustache.

"London is the safest place," Ruhl said. "Once there one can get anywhere. If you wish to escape prison authorities or officials go and live next door to the prison."

Not waiting for a reply Ruhl took two tickets for London, and, hearing the signal that the train was coming in, he strolled on to the platform.

The signal lights for the up train had already changed from red to green, and two white lights glimmered through the night gloom in the distance, gradually drawing nearer. The train was in sight.

Ruhl's heart gave a glad throb then. In a few minutes that iron monster would be bearing him away from the sea of difficulties, and then—

There was no time for further brooding; the train dashed into the station. There were but few passengers to take their seats.

Ruhl and Congreve soon got into an empty first-class compartment and shut the door.

All passengers going on had taken their seats, yet the train did not start. Ruhl looked out; the signals were down. Why did the train wait?

"What are they stopping for?" he said, peevishly.

At that moment the station-master passed the carriage and looked in as he went. The guard followed him, and placed his hand on the handle of the door.

"Now then, if you are going on. Right ahead, there!"

The whistle was placed to his lips, the door flung open, and in leaped four men.

The door bangs, the whistle shrieks out the start, and is answered by the shrill voice of the engine, and the train starts on, with Ruhl and his friend shut up in this compartment with four powerfully built, suspicious-looking men.

His heart sank cold and heavy; he glanced at Congreve. He was sitting like one stupefied. The four men exchanged glances, and one, taking a photograph from his pocket, glanced from it to Ruhl.

"My friend," said Ruhl, desperately, "do you want me?"

"I think so, sir; and your friend from the hall, too."

"I am here," said Congreve; "If you mean John Hopetown."

"That's it, sir."

"But what do you want? We are just going up to London to be at hand for the day the case comes on. We shall be there, my friend," said Ruhl, "when the time comes. Bail is accepted for my appearance and I shall surrender."

"Sorry to say, sir, that we have warrants to take both of you into custody," said the man, producing a pair of handcuffs. "That's our orders."

"You do not want those things; I would rather go to prison than attempt to resist the injustice of these proceedings, whose-ever doing it is."

"Very good, sir; come quiet, and it will be all right. This is an express to London, so we shan't be long. We shall be only too glad to oblige you, gentlemen, in any little way if we can."

"Trapped," said Ruhl, hoarsely, and in German.

"Heaven's will be done," murmured back Congreve, who was strangely enough thinking of his mother, the poor sufferer who had come to consciousness only to drift back into the horrid realms of uncertainty where an awful and violent death awaited her.

He was thinking of her, tenderly, sorrowfully, his mind wandering to the little church in which he had often sat in those years long past—the little church, with its garden of the dead, and somehow he could picture the cold gray slab raised in memory of his gentle mother, could read her name upon it, and then, like the fitting shadow in our dreams, another cold gray slab would start up beside it, sometimes hiding it, sometimes mingling with it.

But this second one made him shiver. It was the one he had seen—the one that proclaimed to the world that horrid falsehood—that bore the name of the living and slandered the dead—the gray slab raised to himself.

Now it bore in his mental vision only his name, and then, vivid as a terrible reality, the date changed, changed to large black figures. He could see them, read them, and by the side of the gray stone stood an angel form as distinctly as if he saw a vision or was endowed with second-sight. The figure was his sainted mother, looking—ah! so sorrowful.

Ruhl, watching her, saw his eyes close, his face change, a death-like pallor overspread it, and the

tightened lips relaxed. A smile gambolled across them, went, came back, and settled there.

Charles did not speak. His own agonized soul was crying out for death to have mercy upon him, the deep religious teaching of his youth forbade him to call upon his Maker.

"Death be merciful!" was his only whispered thought. When he turned his gaze upon Brinsley he was still smiling, his hands being clasped and unclosed. Suddenly a violent emotion passed through his frame, his eyes flashed open.

"Mother, in the name of Heaven—" he suddenly shrieked out.

The sentence remained unfinished; he sank back, with the smile still upon his face and his eyes open.

Ah, what is that wild and terrible shriek from the engine dashing on its way, long and continuous as if its load of three hundred lives were blending into one death-cry, a last appeal to Heaven?

One of the men looks out, starts back, recoils pallid and sick. Ah! the shriech unanswered, and not from afar. There is a grinding, grating and bounding of wheels; the brakes are on. The engine still shrieks as if in appalled terror. Shriek answers shriek. A painful cry runs along the whole length of the train. Then—oh, Heaven, shut our ears! that dreadful crash upon crash, rending and splintering of wood, clashing of iron, hissing and rushing of steam, and the death-cries of the poor souls being mangled, dismembered, or ground to death amidst that dreadful wreck!

The horrid, appalling, grinding crash proceeds along the whole length of the train like a file of musketry, commencing at one end and ending at the other with a continuous roll.

The express has run into a goods train. The driver lies dead amidst the wreck of his overturned engine. The station master is by his side, his death-gasp unreleased upon the handle.

The iron tongue of that snorting, panting monster is silent, and the crashing is over. A pyramid of splinters, of wheels and shattered glass, horribly intermixed with human forms, raises its grim crest beneath the purple sky, and the dying and maimed send up one continuous, appealing cry to Heaven for that succour which Providence has so near at hand.

When the light of day came down upon that scene of desolation and death there lay side by side on a rug spread on the platform a pale, handsome man, with a fair beard and longish hair, and a powerfully-built, sunburnt gentleman, with a large moustache, whose eyes were wide open and upturned bat motionless, whose cold, blue lips were still wreathed in a smile and formed as if for utterance. The last words that had left them were:

"Mother, in the name of Heaven—" And they would never speak again.

CHAPTER XXX.

LONG before the maimed and the dead had been extricated from the wreck of the train from Berks the news of the dreadful accident was wired throughout the United Kingdom, and the first impressions teemed with accounts of it; one paragraph at the bottom of the full details, as far as then collected, caused a stir at Grayshorne.

"By this train the unhappy young man, Charles Ernest Ruhl, cut on bail, who was indicted as the principal in the alleged gigantic Hopetown fraud, in company with the claimant in the case, were being conveyed to London by four plain-clothes officers, one of whom was killed on the spot, as was one of the prisoners. Mr. Charles Ruhl, it is believed, lies in a dangerous state."

"And this," said Edward Temple, "is the end of this brilliant scheme, the vast fraud for which they risked their liberty."

"Retribution has overtaken them in its own way, and they have fallen by higher hands than those of their frail enemies," said Ellen, to whom he had just read the account of the accident.

"I shall hasten down at once, Nell. If this unfortunate young madman should live a day or two, shall I say anything?"

"From me, Ned?"

"Ay, if the poor, misguided fellow is going home, as the saying goes, a kind word or two might lighten the dark journey."

Ellen turned her pale face aside, and indeed her heart was sad. Now that this dreadful calamity had come upon him, that death was perhaps hovering above his head, she could only think of him as the Charles Ruhl of the peaceful days at the old house at Keenington.

"Poor Charles! Yes, I am sorry for him from the very bottom of my heart. I shall ever deeply lament the evil influences that led him so bitterly astray. Tell him, Edward, if he is dying, that I forgive him with all my heart, that I will think of him only as we knew him in the days of distress, when he came, bringing the light of his earnest friendship and protection into the house, and Edward, say that I pray that it was not for my sake

that he—he abandoned the path of truth and honour. Bring him to repent and make his peace, and thank Heaven for thus saving him from the horror of a fate worse, so much worse, than death. Poor Charles, I shall forget his faults and remember only his virtues."

Ellen turned away then and left her brother, her lips were quivering and her eyes were dim. So Edward said no more, but left the room to prepare for his journey.

He saw Frank before he started and showed him the account of the dreadful catastrophe. Frank's sensitive organization received a shock from which he did not recover for several minutes.

He, too, was willing to forgive the unhappy man who had been Ellen's friend.

"So I always would have done had he come to me," he said, grieved. "What I did was compulsory, in sheer self-defence."

And so Edward Temple went on his mission of mercy with a lighter heart, and he arrived long before all traces of the disaster were cleared away.

Unhappily for the public, the some of a railway accident, both at the time and after, is too frequently described by the newspaper reporters to need any description from us. They are all pretty well the same harrowing scenes of horror, death and confusion, the only variation being that sometimes they are of less magnitude than at others.

Physicians had arrived in plenty. The wounded men lay in a waiting-room, to be attended, and if well enough to be sent to their homes. The dead had been removed, and those mortally injured taken to the nearest infirmary.

Learning that Ruhl was not among those at the station he drove on to the infirmary, and made inquiries there. He was shown into the room where the most dangerous cases were. The very first maimed form and pallid face he saw was Ruhl's, and his heart gave a great throb of pity.

Charles Ruhl, and how changed! Edward Temple gazed upon him and shuddered. His jaw was cut and bruised and swelled; his limbs lay limp and helpless. His eyes were open and he was conscious, but he only stared a blank and vacant stare at Temple, when he stood with his head uncovered by the bedside.

"Ruhl," he said, and bent his head low, "do you know me?"

There was a slight movement of the head, a slight shifting of the eyes; the muscles of the mouth relaxed, and a whispered answer in a hot breath passed the lips:

"Her brother—Temple."

"Are you in pain?"

A groaning sigh and upturning of the eyes were his only answer.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Edward, presently, understanding that those dumb motions meant an emphatic affirmation.

"No."

"Poor fellow! I wish I could. I am sorry for you, Ruhl, so is my sister." He seemed to listen attentively at that word, and the smile that was stealing across his lips died away. "She is deeply affected by this horrid accident. She wept for you, Ruhl."

"She, Ellen? She forgives me?"

The old love had strengthened the effort to speak, and his voice was quite audible.

"With all her heart and soul!"

Edward then faithfully delivered Ellen's message, and a gladdened glow overspread the dying man's face, and a thankful light came into his eyes. That look meant prayer, though no word passed his lips.

"I am very grateful, very. It is very good of her. You see I am dying—dying all alone. I prayed for death to take pity on me and come to me. It is coming. Heaven be thanked!"

Then, after a moment's pause:

"Have you seen him—John?"

"Not yet."

"Poor Brinsley, he is dead; was killed on the spot. You had better take possession of his things. You know him?"

"John Hartpool?"

"No. Brinsley Congreve. John Hopetown died by his own act. If I linger on I will make a clear statement of the facts before a magistrate. Oh, Heaven! Oh, that whirl and crash and shrieks, they are all clashing in my head."

He closed slightly and closed his eyes.

The physician arrived at that moment, and, bowing slightly to Temple, looked at his patient.

"He must not talk yet," the doctor said. "Sleep is absolutely necessary."

Edward Temple, in deference to the doctor's opinion, stood apart from the bed. Presently the doctor joined him.

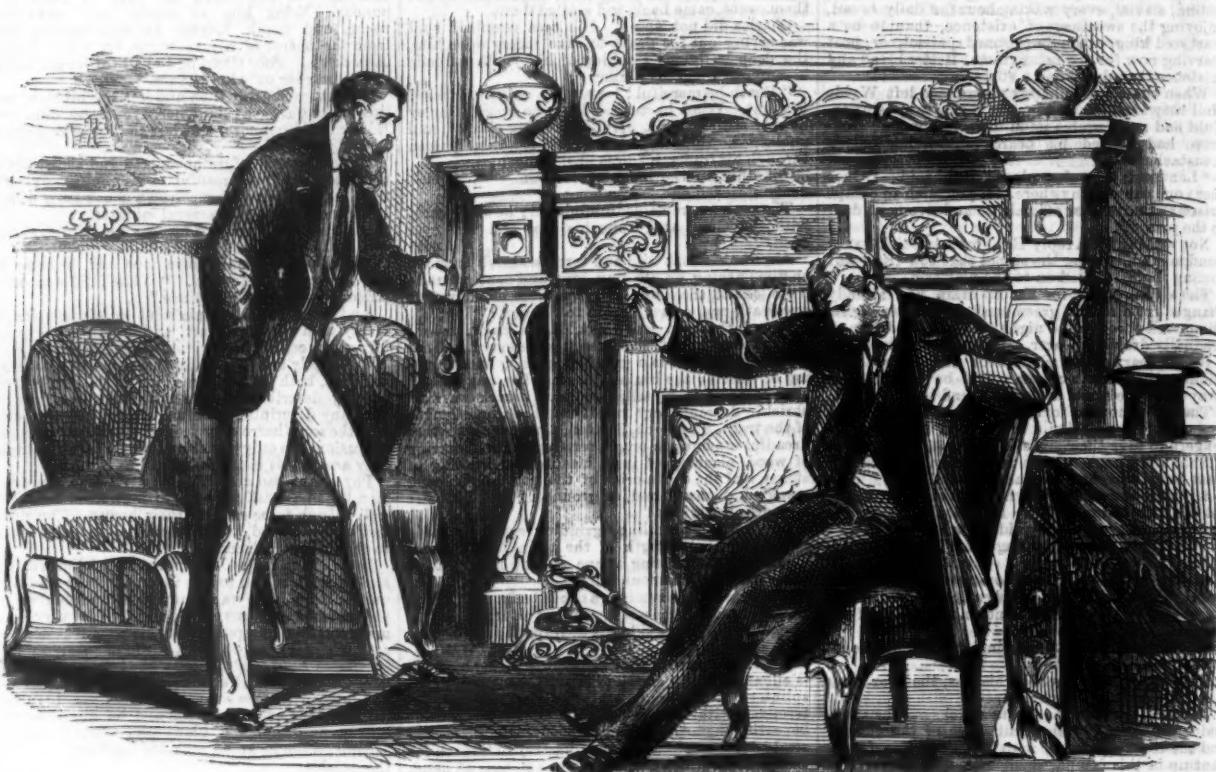
"You are a friend?" he asked.

"In his present state—yes. Do you anticipate his recovery?"

"No. His life is not worth forty-eight hours' purchase."

"Do you think he will rally at all?"

"That is more than probable. In a few hours



[THE PLAY PLAYED OUT.]

he may seem very much better, and may remain so just before the last relapse comes."

"Thanks. I want, if possible, to get a magistrate to take his depositions."

"He will revive enough for that, I believe. An officer in plain clothes will be sent to watch him presently. If so, he will communicate any change in him to me, and if you say where you are to be found he will send you word if the patient wishes to see you. I should not be far away."

"Thank-, I shall not."

When Edward Temple left the infirmary he noticed a man who was hanging about the door. The man's face was familiar, and he seemed to recognize Edward at a glance, for he touched his hat and approached him with a smile.

He was one of the first detectives Temple had employed in hunting out the facts of the great fraud.

"Well, Blake, you are just the man I want."

"Glad of that, sir. Seen either of 'em."

"Yes, the living one."

"So have I, and telegraphed to Scotland Yard."

"I am going to see the other. Where are the dead?"

"Come with me, sir; I've got the things; not much of importance in the pockets excepting a letter addressed to Francis Craythorpe Hopetown."

"Have you got that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you had better give it to me."

"There's an open letter as well, sir—one that was sent by a solicitor to Charles Ruhl—and says something about a Mrs. Congreve dying raving mad."

"I should like to see that; it may throw some additional light on the case."

The detective handed over the two letters. The other property would have to be given up at Scotland Yard.

Edward Temple could not repress a shudder when he entered the presence of the dead—disfigured and ghastly remnants of humanity they were.

The only ones who looked quiet and peaceful, as if he had died without pain, was Brinsley Congreve. In the presence of the detective and another officer, Edward Temple examined the body. The marks that he and many others could swear to as being indelibly stamped upon John Hopetown were not to be seen.

"As I thought," Temple said. "He is not John Hopetown. Heaven! and this is the end of such a gigantic fraud!"

"Our mates got pretty well knocked to pieces," said the detective, much in the same manner as he would have said anything else. "One is dead; an-

other ain't expected to live, an' it's doubtful whether the other two won't be cripples."

"Poor fellows! no doubt something will be done for their families if they have any. I shall remain close to the infirmary; there is a tavern near. I wish you would help me a little."

"I am at your service, sir."

"That's it, then; come now with me. A magistrate must be communicated with, and I must be kept acquainted with every change in Charles Ruhl."

"I'll see to it, sir."

"Thanks."

When Edward Temple was alone in a room which he hired at the tavern close by the infirmary he wrote at once to the late Mrs. Congreve's agent, requesting him to come up and see if he could identify the body lying here as that of her son.

He was careful not to leave a single point out of the evidence that might leave a doubt should Ruhl not recover sufficiently to make a confession.

But Charles Ruhl's statement alone would have cleared up the whole truth, revealed the whole of the gigantic fraud; and fortunately he lived to make that confession, but not until a day or so had elapsed.

Then, by his own desire, a magistrate was fetched and in his presence and that of Edward Temple he revealed the whole truth, and it was long and painfully tedious work to get through it.

"From the time I came in possession of the history of Mr. Hopetown I conceived the wild notion of finding some one to substitute John Hopetown, whom I thought dead beyond all doubt. I traced his movements, as long as they could be traced. I left nothing undone, as I thought, to make the knowledge of his doings in early years perfect. I had known him personally and also his friends and distant relatives.

"Early in August I met his old friend, Mr. Brinsley Congreve, who was very much like John Hopetown. Congreve was starving. The moment I met him I thought that here was my chance. Adversity and hunger might sap his resolution, and a wild life had blunted his sense of honour and right. I remained with him that day and at dusk returned to the park to stroll up and down the Serpentine path that we might talk over old times.

"While we were doing so our attention was attracted by a loud splash in the water, the falling of a heavy body; we at once hastened to the spot and there I saw on the bank a man's clothing. Congreve tore off his coat, hat and vest and plunged in the river, and while he was swimming about to find the person in the water, I was curious to see what a white packet was which lay on the crown of

the suicide's hat. I struck a match, and to my astonishment saw a letter addressed to Mrs. or Francis Hopetown, or their solicitors. At the bottom was 'The last from your lost, unhappy relation, John Hopetown.'

"In an instant I possessed myself of this letter, rifled the pockets of the dead man's clothes, and substituted my friend's for them. I never stayed to think. The fiendish impulse came upon me like a flash of light, and I committed the theft in the space of a few minutes. When Congreve came ashore I handed him the dead man's clothes. He never detected the difference until he was in the receiving-house and then I told him that no one would believe it was a mistake—that if he said a word we should be suspected.

"From that night I kept him away from the receiving-house, but on going myself found a Mrs. Wilkins, his landlady. She went to view the body. The dead man was very much like Congreve, his clothes aided the deception. The old lady swore to him, so did I, and he was buried—he, the real John Hopetown—as Brinsley Congreve."

Then he explained how—as the reader already knows—he made Congreve change his name to Hartpool, how he went abroad, the advertisement in the paper, how he had given Congreve the dead man's watch and rings and pocket book, the watch which any one could swear to who had known John Hopetown.

"And I did it under a written agreement that I should have fifteen thousand pounds and a little estate near Henley," Ruhl said, by way of conclusion. "And but for the coming of Edward Temple, who had met John Hopetown, whom everybody thought dead, we should not have been found out."

It was not until some little time after that the world learned how the gigantic scheme had been carried out, one of the boldest and most enormous swindles ever on record, and yet the straightforward, gentlemanlike Charles Ruhl, with his German stolidity and radiant smile, his accomplishments and his energy, was the one master-mind that did it all. For what? The love he early lost; the ship came home only to be wrecked when his foot was on the deck, and himself to die a mangled, disfigured being, friendless, an outcast, with no tear shed over his death-bed, and but the image of Amy lingering in his death-stricken glance, his fading memory, until the lamp went out, and who then could tell him from the rest who had followed the common lot of all? Peace go with him! If the righteous have their reward then all the more should they raise a voice to Heaven and pray that he might be forgiven.

THE END.



MARLIN MARDUKE.

CHAPTER XII.

This battle fares like to the morning's war
When dying clouds contend with growing light.
Shakespeare.

The young commandant, having fought his way to his force, at once gave the order to charge upon the smugglers.

Geoffrey Marduke and his treacherous son, Captain Herod, confident in their great superiority of numbers, ordered their desperadoes to spring forward to meet the advance of the coastguard, and the shouts, the exchange of defiance and irregular discharge of small-arms created that overpowering sense of terror which compelled Elena to hide the scene of strife from her eyes.

"There will be fearful work now," said Kaspar Rheinhand, as he peered from the window. "The men are all warn, and it is very probable that Marlin Marduke's day has come. But the travellers in No. 8—"

"His day of what?" demanded Elena, who had caught not only his words but also the malignant accent of triumph in his tone.

She did not withdraw her hands from her eyes, from fear that sights of horror might appal her soul, but she spoke quickly and even defiantly to the coarse and brutal man at her side.

"His day of doom, girl," growled the innkeeper, savagely. "For once my young gentleman has filled his hands too full."

Leaning far from the window, Rheinhand waved his cap to his friends below and shouted the cry that had so suddenly become popular in Anglesey:

"Long live King William the Third!"

There was little that was cowardly in the composition of the massive innkeeper, but there was much that was prudent. It mattered very little to him whether the house of Stuart or the house of Orange ruled in England so long as the house of Kaspar Rheinhand flourished. But men not half so shrewd as the burly innkeeper saw that a new dynasty was already in possession of the realm, and he, ever ready to float upon the stream of public opinion, shouted his newborn loyalty to the Dutch usurper so loudly that his cries were heard above all the roar of that strife upon which the gentle-hearted Elena could not gaze without trembling.

A ball whizzed past the landlord's ear, cutting a deep gash in his cheek and shattering splinters from the window frame.

"Ah!" he cried, in the shrill tone of sudden pain, as he hurried from the window and clapped his hand

to his face, "Marlin Marduke fired that ball and he meant to kill!"

Growling a volley of imprecations, and stamping with rage and pain, he bade Elena try to staunch the flow of blood.

"Haste, girl," he said. "You have bound up wounds before and done it well. I am bleeding like a stuck hog—do you hear?"

Elena—if she heard—was so absorbed in the fierce conflict going on before the inn that she did not turn from the window.

Curiosity had overcome her fear, and she had fixed her eyes upon the struggle the moment before Kaspar received his wound, and what she saw at a glance must hasten to describe.

Marlin Marduke had expected to meet with a stout but brief resistance, for he had every confidence in the valour and experience of his men. But the struggle had scarcely begun when he perceived that the outlaws were fully organised for more than mere defence of any of their number from arrest. It became plain that Geoffrey Marduke and Captain Herod meant to capture him.

It soon became evident that the entire force of the coastguard was in danger of being surrounded and either cut to pieces or captured.

The commandant saw with bitter sorrow the imminent danger of his force.

The smugglers swept the coastguard into a compact mass, surrounding them completely, and striking at them with a ferocity which they had never displayed before in their combats with the servants of the government.

Hitherto in the many sharp collisions which for years had been frequent in or near Anglesey the aim of the outlaws had ever been to effect an speedy an escape as possible from the presence of the coastguard, taking their smuggled goods with them. But on this occasion the fixed and chief determination of the outlaws was undoubtedly the capture of the commandant and the destruction of his entire force.

As Elena withdrew her hands from her eyes and gazed forth she saw that Geoffrey Marduke and Captain Herod were closely pressing upon the ranks of the coastguard, who were now formed into a circle, in the centre of which stood her resolute lover.

The circle rapidly grew less and less as it was fiercely assailed with lead and steel on every side.

The coastguards used their arms with skill, and with the terrible execution of despair, as was proved by the great number of dead or wounded smugglers lying upon the ground as they had fallen, and by the many being hastily borne away by their friends. Some had no careful friends near, and were tram-

pled upon recklessly, as the hoarse shouts of Geoffrey Marduke urged on the unequal fight.

Despite the great odds against him Marlin Marduke and his party held their own, and for each man of their force that fell three of their enemies were disabled.

The commandant heard the shouts of the innkeeper encouraging the outlaws, and discharging that shot at him of which we have spoken.

Scarcely a moment after Elena uttered a shrill cry of grief and horror.

A stone, of which hundreds were flying through the air, thrown by the women and children of the smugglers, struck Marlin full upon the head, and he fell as if slain.

The shrill scream of Elena was understood by Kaspar Rheinhand. He laughed mockingly, and again thrusting his enormous head from the window, added his bull-like bellowing to the shouts, the whoops, the roars of triumph raised by the exultant mob as its most formidable foe fell as if dead.

No panic seized upon the followers of the prostrate commandant, he had disciplined them too admirably, and though his fall was a serious loss to them they continued to battle as fiercely as before.

But they believed that their brave commander was no more, and therefore made no attempt to bear away his body, so that Geoffrey Marduke's hand was soon upon the breast of Marlin.

"He is not dead," muttered the smuggler, grimly, as he knelt near the prostrate form. "I am glad of that."

"And why?" demanded Captain Herod, fiercely, for he had overheard the words of his father. "Better make an end of him or some day he may make an end of you."

"Perhaps he may," growled Geoffrey, sarcastically. "Come, leave this matter to me. Call off your men, and let the rascally guards escape."

"And that fellow Marlin cut down?" demanded Captain Herod; "the spy? Shall he be allowed to make off?"

"It is too late to ask that question," replied Geoffrey. "The fellow is either dead or wounded or escaped already."

Captain Herod gazed eagerly towards the steel-bristling circle of the coastguard, but failed to see the dark face and tall slender form of Obel Ling among the combatants.

"Perhaps the hound is dead," he thought. "I hope he is—his eye had a prophetic threat in it against my life."

"Call off your crew as I do mine," said Geoffrey, raising a whistle to his lips and sending forth a

keen signal well understood by his immediate followers.

Captain Herod complied, and within a few moments the survivors of the coastguard found their flight from the spot unopposed.

"Push on, lads!" said a sergeant, the only officer now left to command the coastguard. "I thought it was all over with every man of us, but it seems they don't intend to murder all of us—push on, lads, or old Geoffrey may change his mind."

"Which way, sergeant, shall we go?" asked one of the men.

"Push on for the quarter of the horse-guard; we may have another crack at those fiends," replied the sergeant, as he cast a hurried glance over his shoulder towards the spot where his beloved commander had fallen. "Death seize me this instant!" he added, bursting into fierce and bitter rage; "it shames me to my very marrow, lads, to be forced to leave Marlin Marduke's body in the hands of those wolves. But he's dead, and there's an end of the matter."

With these words, and with a fierce imprecation upon his pale, thin lips, the sergeant hastened away, preceded by the remnants of the well-appointed force which had battled so vainly and yet so bravely against overpowering odds.

They were not pursued, for it was not the desire of Geoffrey Marduke to disable many more of his own forces merely to crush out the remnant of the coastguard.

His main purpose was well achieved. The detested commandant was at last in the hand of those in whose eyes he had been as sand, and in whose way he had been a lion for many a day.

Geoffrey Marduke had his own dark and private reasons for being exultant in the capture of his son Marlin; but what those reasons were must be told hereafter, as he held, literally, from habit, his tongue between his teeth, and would have bitten it off with disgust had he known that it could ever bring him timely any secret of his.

Captain Herod, too, had his reason for exultation, or, rather, several strong reasons, and not the least of these was the hope that Marlin Marduke might never again be able to cherish a hope that Elena Rheinhand could be his bride.

There was a ferocious and murderous gleam in the eyes of Herod Marduke as he saw the senseless form of his half-brother lifted by four stout men at the command of his father—a glare like that which may have blazed in the eyes of Cain as he looked for a club wherewith to strike his brother down.

"I hope that fellow is really dead!" he muttered. "As I live, he looks as if he has breathed his last. The stone struck him fairly on the temple. I'd give the hand that threw that stone the weight of gold if I could find who threw it!"

"Carefully, men, carefully!" cried Geoffrey, as the form of the unconscious commandant was borne towards the house. "Who is that shrieking? Oh, it is Elena Rheinhand!" he added, with a sneer upon his hard face.

"Is he dead? Oh, tell me!—is he dead?" screamed the agitated girl, as she struggled through the crowd.

"I hope he is! and little luck lost to Anglesey if he is!" shouted a shrill, angry voice in the maiden's ear, while at the same instant a rude and powerful grasp was laid upon her arm. "He was one of your lovers, wasn't he? I hope you have lost him, Elena Rheinhand; then perhaps you may sympathize with me."

Laughing a sharp, bitter, and disagreeable laugh, the speaker forced her face into that of Elena, as if she yearned to scour her cheeks and lips and brow to a crisp with the fire of her flashing, fierce, and yet beautiful eyes.

When Elena saw Marlin Marduke fall she uttered that keen cry of grief to which Kasper Rheinhand had replied with a mocking laugh, and as the burly innkeeper turned from her to gaze forth she darted away before he was aware even of her departure.

Dread leat her betrothed were slain gave the maiden strength and resolution to thrust herself boldly into that disorderly mob rapidly concentrating around the fallen chief of the defeated coastguard.

She had nearly forced her way to the form of her unconscious lover when some one near her said:

"At least Marlin Marduke is dead."

It was then that she uttered that cry of heart-anguish which had attracted the attention of Geoffrey and that of the tall, handsome, but fierce-looking young woman who addressed her in the taunting words we have just quoted.

CHAPTER XIII.

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty.

Shakespeare.

ELENA was in no humour to be stayed by any one, especially by the bold and presumptuous person who, in the fierce excitement of the moment,

dared to use a familiarity of speech and of touch it was well known in all Anglesey the proud and reserved "beauty of the inn" permitted no one to address towards her.

She thrust the bold and handsome sunburnt face from its near approach to hers with a rapid, nervous gesture which made the speaker recoil almost to falling, and then, without deigning to pause to note the effect of her action, darted on until she met those who were bearing the body of her lover towards the inn.

"You have killed him! You have murdered your own son, Geoffrey Marduke! Shame, foul shame upon you!" she exclaimed, as her eyes fell upon the pale and ghastly face of Marlin.

Her bearers were rough, rough fellows of the caverns of the beach, neither true seamen nor regular landmen, but nothing the fiercest and hardest qualities of each, yet as they marked the keen anguish depicted upon the beautiful face of the agitated maiden each man made a hasty effort to carry the unconscious form more tenderly, while one said in a hoarse, husky whisper:

"It are nae me bad, my pretty lady, as ye s'pose. He be nae mi kilt, butlyss daid wi a lile fra a pebble. Tak' heart, lady."

Never to Elena's ear had words sounded so sweetly as these in the broad dialect of this coarse and heavy-limbed crew.

"You are saying whistles not true, Coal Dikeman," she said, as she grasped the strong arm of the speaker and endeavoured to peer into the white face he bore upon his shoulder.

"I swear ye, lady, he be nae daid loike. He'll be on his pins in an hou'!" replied the man.

He added to himself in a whispering way under his heavy moustache:

"It was all the same to he, tho', for his death be a thing decided 'pon by every gang in and abegh Anglesy."

Their conversation was ended by the voice and presence of Geoffrey Marduke, who advanced and passed his arm through that of Elena, saying, firmly:

"The two shamus! What has become of them? You are just from within—are they in the inn?"

"Free my arm, air!" replied Elena, haughtily, for she loathed the fierce old buccaneer with a bitterness that seemed strange to her mind whenever she remembered that he was the father of the man whom she loved far more than she loved her own life. "Free my arm, air! What do you take me for that you dare to seize me so rudely?"

"Peace—no heroics with me now, girl," he replied, with a sharp bitterness. "Perhaps I may make you rue the day if you have aided those strangers to escape."

With these words he cast her arm from him with a fierce gesture and rushed into the inn.

Elena, even at that moment of confusion and tumult, with the air full of shouts and yells, and the blinding glare of many torches, felt the threat of the smugger chief penetrate to the centre of her heart.

She shuddered and clasped one of the pale, lifeless hands of her lover as it swung downward—clasped it desperately, thinking:

"Ah, my Marlin! my love, my life, if they slay thee it matters little indeed what becomes of me!"

She glanced around at the moment, and, though her mind was too much occupied with the situation of her lover to permit her to remark much that was passing, she caught the dark and flashing eyes of her whose face she had thrust aside, watching her keenly.

The girl, we have said, was tall and handsome, but there was much that was bold and aggressive in her features, in her postures, and in the tone of her voice. She was clad in costly silk, which had been part of her father's share of the plunder of the luckless "La Belle France"—a ship to which allusion has been made. Much taste, too, far in excess of that displayed in general in the garments of the female inhabitants of Anglesey, was evident in the fashion and make of her garb. Over her queenly shoulders she wore a costly shawl as carelessly as if it had been but one of a thousand she possessed.

A dark and queenly and haughty beauty she was, with massive curls of jet clustering around her neck, much dishevelled them by the rising wind and the excitement of the hour.

Elena caught her glance as she passed near her, and returned it with no disdainful gaze, for her soul was thinking only of her lover. Without Elena's intending that it should be so, or even so much as knowing that it was so, the expression of her beautiful and tearful eyes as they met the fierce and angry gaze of Zona Vultree said:

"Pity me! for all I love on earth seems dead or dying! Ah, all should pity and not hate me."

We stated that Elena did not pause to mark the effect of that sharp thrust of her hand with which she had scornfully repelled the insolence of this bold beauty when Zona thrust herself in Elena's way.

Had Elena looked back at that time she would have perceived that her random blow struck Zona upon the cheek, hurling her almost to the ground less from the violence of the blow than from its being wholly unexpected.

She would have seen, too, that Zona thrust her hand under her rich, smuggled shawl, half-drew a broad-bladed dagger, and drew almost black with rage.

Yet if Elena had noticed all this, or heard the muttered deadly menace spoken by Zona's passion-quivering lips, she would have cared very little for the matter. Though not so strong in frame as Zona Vultree, Elena was of dauntless spirit, and more inclined by nature and the sights she had seen since she could remember to run to meet rather than to fly to avoid danger or menace of danger.

She would have seen, also, that as the astonished Zona reeled under that sharp, stinging blow from her small, white hand, Captain Herod Marduke strode past Zona laughing and saying something that made the flushed and burning cheeks of the angry girl change to the ashy pallor of redoubled wrath.

The words of Captain Herod were these, and there was a sneer upon his lips as he swaggered by the girl:

"You called her a 'pretty little pigeon'—you think she isna hawk now, don't you?"

Having uttered this mocking remark, whose meaning was plainly understood by Zona Vultree, Captain Herod swaggered on, crying out in his broad, powerful tones:

"Man-scarsh, lads, for the body of the spy and traitor Odell Ling—he may have escaped. Search for the spy, every one."

But Elena, as we have said, saw nothing and heard nothing of all this, so wholly absorbed was her heart, soul and mind in the fate of her lover. Thus, when her lovely eyes met that fierce stare of the enraged Zona, the latter read in their soft expression only that plea of heart's anguish, unspoken by the lip, but plainly inscribed upon every feature.

"Pity me! for all I love on earth seems dead or dying! Ah, all should pity and not hate me!"

Zona, with her sunburnt face ashy pale, with her lips white and quivering, with a strange fire flaming in her handsome though bold eyes, grasped Elena's wrist with a desperate clutch as the latter was about to pass her, and whispered in her ear, with a fierce rapidity that would be heard:

"Is it true that it is only Marlin and not Herod that you love?"

To reply Elena was compelled to release the lifeless hand of her lover, for his bearers moved steadily on towards the inn.

So she let fall that dear hand and turned to confront this bold girl, who had twice within a few minutes dared take the liberty to place her hand upon the person of one who had hitherto held her self far above contact with the wives and daughters of the smugglers.

"Speak!" again whispered Zona. "Is it true that you love only the commandant?"

"Can any one in Anglesey ask me that question, Zona Vultree?" replied Elena, blushing deeply as it flashed through her mind how loudly and how plainly she had declared her heart's devotion.

"Then it is not true that you love Herod Marduke also!" demanded Zona, with a keen, anxious bitterness of gaze and tone which Elena could not fail to remark even then. "You do not love Captain Herod?"

"Great Heaven! no!" replied Elena.

"But you have encouraged his frequent visit to the 'Stuart Arms'?"

"As Heaven is above me, girl, I have never given Herod Marduke as much as a glance that he or any one else could imagine anything but a glance of indifference if not of positive dislike. Girl, free my wrist!"

"Stay!" said Zona, eagerly. "I know that I am taking a great liberty in daring to touch you—"

"Ah, you are sneering now! Will you free my wrist?" interrupted Elena, beginning to grow angry, and very impatient to see what disposal would be made of the insolent commandant.

"I am not sneering," replied Zona, and still clinging to Elena's wrist. "I know now that I have no right to place a finger on you; but while I believed you loved him I had a right to slay you, Elena Rheinhand."

She pointed towards the lofty form of Captain Herod, who was moving about, seeking tidings of the escaped spy. She pointed at him, while her hand and arm, and indeed her whole splendid form, quivered with passion.

"I say, Elena Rheinhand, even were you a born lady—as some say they believe you are—were you a countess, or a queen, Elena Rheinhand, and sought the love of Herod Marduke—I have and would use the right to plant this in your heart!"

The fierce girl drew her dagger as she spoke and held it not far from Elena's face.

"You have struck me, too, Elena Rheinhand," she continued, "but with far less of flesh and fire in her eye, "you have struck me, and there'll be a bruise on my cheek from that blow for many an hour yet, but were you to strike me a thousand cruel blows even with the lash, you could not make me thirst for your life, Elena Rheinhand, as I would were you to win that man's love from me—were you even to try to win his love from me."

"I did not mean to bruise your cheek, Zona, though I did mean that neither you nor any one else should keep me from the side of the man I love," replied Elena, with a firmness which her steady, calm courage made imposing. "So far from loving or desiring to be beloved by Herod Marduke, I hate him, and would to Heaven that his eyes might never meet mine again. Free my wrist, Zona Vulture."

"One moment, Elena Rheinhand," interrupted the fiery Zona, "I love Captain Herod, and he has pretended he loved me—indeed I do not believe he ever loved me. I have till now thought you were seeking his love."

"I tell you, girl, I loathe the very glance of his eye."

"Glad to hear you say so, Mistress Elena; it is better for you that I believe you—better for him whom you love, too. I bear no malice for the blow you gave me. I do not think that you knew when you struck—so let that pass. Will you let me be your friend?"

"My friend in what?"

"In any and in everything."

"But a moment ago, Zona, your face declared that you wished to kill me, not simply that you wished I were dead and buried, but that you yearned to kill me yourself, to trample upon me with your own feet."

"It was because I thought you sought the love of Captain Herod, Elena Rheinhand," replied Zona, the flame of jealous rage again flashing from her large, magnificent eyes. "I would wish to kill you with my own hands, to trample upon you with my own feet if you seek to win his love. But I see that I was wrong. Let me be your friend, and perhaps I may save the commandant's life."

"Save his life?" exclaimed Elena. "Surely, if he recover from his present wounds they will not then desire to take his life."

"They intend to take his life," replied Zona, coldly, "and there is but one who can save him."

"You mean his father?"

"No, I do not mean Sir Geoffrey Marduke, for even he must yield to the unanimous voice of his desperate followers. Geoffrey Marduke may desire to save Maria's life—I do not know—but no one can save him except me."

"Ah!" said Elena, in a tremulous voice, "and that one—"

For an instant the beautiful lips of Zona Vulture curled with a haughty smile, then a sharp, hollow laugh, more like a sob than a laugh, escaped from the close-set and glittering teeth as she said:

"Is myself, Zona Vulture, and no other!"

At that moment myriads of glowing sparks shot up like an explosion, as the roof of the stable fell in with a dull, groaning crash of charred timbers sinking into ashes.

Glancing away instantly, Elena saw the red andullen glare of the fiery heap lighting up the dark and malign though handsome face of Captain Herod. He was looking towards them, and there was a scowl of displeasure upon his heavy brow and a smile of evil exultation around his lips.

(To be continued.)

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, is in despair. One of its chief library treasures is missing—viz., the Book of Kells, written by Saint Columbkil in 475—the oldest book in the world, and the most perfect specimen of Irish art, with the richest illuminations, and valued at 12,000*l.* It is alleged to have been sent to the British Museum for the purpose of being bound. The college-solicitor, Mr. Mann, has been sent it, it is said, with a sealed order from the board of Trinity College to the trustees of the British Museum, requiring immediate delivery of the peerless volume.

DISCOVERY OF ROMAN REMAINS.—At Irchester, in the county of Northampton, recently, some workmen, whilst digging for ironstone on the property of R. Arkwright, Esq., Kneaton Hall, came upon a stone coffin six feet from the surface, the body of which was hewn out of solid stone, being in such a good state of preservation as to make it evident that it had been neatly dressed by the hand of some skilful workman. The lid or cover, composed of one slab of stone, was made fast to the body of the coffin by four wrought-iron clamps, fixed in the stone in the same manner as is usual in the present day. On removing the lid it was found that the principal bones of the arms and legs, together with a portion of the skull (to which was attached a small quantity of apparently light suburn hair) alone remained; the

rest had returned to dust. From the leg bones were collected some fibrous substance, which on closer examination appeared to be a part of the burial garment. This curious ground on which the remains have been found is said to be a Roman encampment, and during the last twelve months, during excavations, no less than two or three hundred skulls have been turned up, some of them very perfect, and in not a few of them the teeth were in a fine state of preservation. Other rude tombs have been discovered, consisting only of loose pieces of flat stone, placed round, and surmounted by a stone slab. Several bronze bowls have also been found; two of them, which were beautifully perforated, were evidently used for culinary purposes. Coins of Faustina, Adrianus, Gratianus, Antoninus, and Constantius have been picked up in the immediate vicinity, clearly denoting the age to which they belonged.

CAST ON THE WORLD.

CHAPTER XXII.

DARK night had closed in upon Beechwood, but in the sick room a light was dimly burning, showing the white face of the invalid, who was sleeping quietly now. The crisis was passed, and weak as a little child he lay, powerless and helpless beneath the mighty weight of sorrow which had fallen upon him.

Geraldine had been sitting with him, but when she saw that it was nine she cautiously left the room, and, stealing down the stairs, joined Mr. Wilson and Mr. Thornton in the parlour. Sinking into a chair and leaning her head upon it, she did not seem to hear the hasty step in the hall; but when Hepsy's shrill voice said "Good evenin', gentle folks," she looked up, apparently surprised to see the old lady there at that hour of the night.

"Have you heard from Oliver?" she asked; and Hepsy answered:

"Not a word. I'm gettin' awfully concerned; but that ain't what brought me here. Feelin' lonesome-like without Clubs, thinks I, I'll look over the chust where I keep Hannah's things."

"A fine way to get rid of the blues," said the old man, while Hepsy continued:

"Amongst the things was a box, which must have been put away unopened, for I found in it this letter concerning Mildred," and she held up the bit of paper which, having been nicely rubbed and smoked by Geraldine, looked old and rather soiled.

"Let me see it," said Mr. Wilson, and, adjusting his gold-bordered spectacles, he read aloud a letter from Esther Bennet, telling Hannah Hawkins that Mildred was the child of Helen Thornton, and bidding her keep it a secret. "This confirms it," he said. "There is no need now of your sifting the matter as we intended to do," and he handed the half-sheet to Mr. Thornton just as the sound of many feet was heard in the hall without.

Richard, Oliver, Mildred and Edith had come!

The latter, being half-asleep, was deposited upon the floor with Mildred's shawl for a pillow, and while Mildred stole off upstairs, promising her father only to look into Lawrence's room, and not to show herself to him, Richard and Oliver advanced into the parlour.

"Clubs! Clubs!" screamed Hepsy, catching him round the neck. "Where have you been?"

Oliver did not answer, but sat watching Richard, who was gazing at his father with an expression upon his face something like what it wore when first he recognized his daughter. Every eye in the room was turned towards him, but none scanned his features so curiously as did the old man.

"Who is it, Robert?" he whispered, while his cheeks turned pale. "Who is standing there, and what makes him stare so at me?"

But Mr. Thornton could not tell, and he was about to question the stranger when Richard advanced towards his father, and, laying a hand on either shoulder, looking wistfully into the old man's eyes; then, pointing to his own portrait hanging just beyond, he said:

"Have I changed so greatly that there is no resemblance between us?"

"Oh, Heaven! it's Richard—it's Richard. Do you hear? 'Tis my boy! 'Tis Dick come back to me again!"

The old man could say no more, but sank upon the sofa faint with surprise, and tenderly supported by his son.

Half beside herself with fear Geraldine came forward, demanding haughtily:

"Who are you, sir, and why are you here?"

"I am Richard Wilson, madam, and have come to expose your villainous plot," was the stranger's low-spoken answer. And Geraldine cowered back into the farthest corner, while the old man, rallying a little, said mournfully:

"You told me, Dick, of lonesome years, when I should wish I hadn't said those bitter things to you, and after you were gone I was lonesome, oh! so lonesome, till I took little Mildred. Richard!"

And the old man sprang to his feet electrified, as it were, with the wild hope which had burst upon him.

"Richard, who is Mildred?"

"My own daughter, father. Mine and Hetty Kirby's," was the answer deliberately spoken, while Richard cast a withering glance at the corner where Geraldine still sat, overwhelmed with guilt and shame, for she knew now that exposure was inevitable.

With a sudden, hateful impulse she muttered:

"An unlawful child. A fit wife, truly, for Lawrence Thornton."

The words caught the old man's ear, and springing like lightning across the floor he exclaimed:

"Geraldine Veille, if you hint such a thing again, I'll shake you into shoe a string," and, by way of demonstration, he seized the guilty woman's shoulder and shook her lustily. "Mildred had as good a right to be born as you, for Dick was married to Hetty. I always knew that."

And he tottered back to the sofa, just as Edith, frightened at finding herself in a strange place, began to cry.

Stepping into the hall for a moment, Richard soon returned, bringing her in his arms, and, advancing towards the old man, he said:

"I've brought you another grandchild, father. Is there room in your heart for little Edith?"

The eyes which looked wonderingly at the old man were very much like Mildred's, and they touched a chord at once.

"Yes, Dick, there's room for Edith," he returned, "because she's like Gipsy."

And he offered to take the little girl, who, not quite certain whether she liked her new grandpa or not, clung closer to her father, and began to cry for "Sister Milly."

"Here, Edith, come to me," said Oliver; and, taking her back into the hall, he whispered: "Mildred is upstairs; go and find her."

The upper hall was lighted, and, following Oliver's directions, Edith ascended the stairs, while her father, thus relieved of her, began to make some explanations, having first greeted Mr. Thornton, whom he remembered well.

"Where have you been, Dick? Where have you been all these years?" asked the old man, in a hoarse voice; and, holding his father's trembling hand in his, Richard repeated, in substance, what the reader has already heard, asking if neither of his letters had been received.

"Yes, one; telling me you were going to India," returned the old man; "but I hadn't forgiven you then for marrying Hetty Kirby, and I would not answer it; but I've forgiven you now, hoy—I've forgiven you now, for that marriage has been the means of the greatest happiness I ever experienced. It gave Gipsy to me. Where is Mildred, Richard? Why don't she come to see her granddad?"

"She's upstairs, tissin' a man," interposed little Edith, who had just entered the room, her brown eyes protruding like marbles, as if utterly confounded with what they had beheld. "She is," she continued, as Oliver tried to hush her; "I saw her, and he tissed her back just as loud as that!" and by way of illustration she smacked her own fat hand.

"Come here, you mischief!" and catching her before she was aware of his intention, the delighted old man threw her higher than his head, asking her to tell him "how Mildred tissed the man."

But Edith was not yet inclined to talk with him, and so we will explain how it happened that Mildred was with Lawrence. After leaving her father her first visit was to her own room, which she found occupied by Lillian, who, having a slight headache, had retired early, and was fast asleep. Not caring to awaken her, Mildred turned back, and seeing the door of Lawrence's chamberajar, could not forbear stealing on tiptoe towards it, thinking that the sound of his breathing would be better than nothing. While she stood there listening she heard him whisper, "Mildred," for he was thinking of her, and unconsciously he repeated the dear name. In an instant she forgot everything, and springing to his side wound her arms around his neck, sobbing in his ear:

"Dear, dear Lawrence, I've come back to you, and we shall not be parted again. It is all a fraud—a wicked falsehood. I am not Mildred Hawley—I am Mildred Wilson—Richard's child. He's downstairs, Lawrence. My own father is in the house. Do you hear?"

He did hear, and comprehended it too, but for some moments he could only weep over her and call her his "darling Milly." Then, when more composed, he listened while she told him what she knew, interspersing her narrative with the kisses which had so astonished

Edith and sent her with the wondrous tale to the drawing-room, from which she soon returned, and marching this time boldly up to Mildred, said :

" That big man says you mustn't tell him any more," and she looked askance at Lawrence, who laughed aloud at the little creature's attitude and manner.

" This is to be your brother," said Mildred, and lifting Edith up, she placed her on the bed with Lawrence, who kissed her chubby cheeks and called her " little sister."

" You've grown awfully," said Edith, mistaking him for the boy baby who had died with her mother, for in no other way could she reconcile the idea of a brother.

" What does she mean?" asked Lawrence.

And Mildred explained to him how Edith had confounded him with the baby buried in her mother's coffin.

" I don't wonder she thinks I've grown," said he.

Ere Mildred could reply Richard called to her, bidding her come down, and leaving Edith with Lawrence, she hastened to the parlour, where Mr. Wilton was waiting to receive her.

With heaving chest and quivering lip he held her to his bosom, and she could feel the hot tears dropping on her hair as he whispered :

" My Gipsy, my Spitfire, my diamond, my precious, precious child. If I hadn't been a great stupid, I should have known you were a Wilton, and that madam couldn't have imposed that staff on me. Hanged if I ever believed it! Didn't I swear all the time 'twas not true? Say 'grandpa' once, little vixen. Say it once, and let me hear how it sounds!"

" Dear, dear grandpa," she answered, kissing him quite as she had kissed Lawrence Thornton.

" And Clubs went for you," he continued. " Heaven bless old Clubs, but how did he find it out? I can't understand it yet."

Then, as his eye fell on Geraldine, who still sat in the corner, stupefied and bewildered, he shook his fist at her threateningly, bidding her tell in a minute what she knew of Esther Bennett and the confounded plot.

" Yes, Geraldine," said Mr. Thornton, advancing towards her, " you may as well confess the part you had in this affair. It is useless longer to try and conceal it. Oliver heard enough to implicate you deeply, and Mrs. Thompson"—turning to Hepsy, whom, greatly against her will, Oliver had managed to keep there—" Mrs. Thompson will, of course, tell what she knows, and so save herself from—"

" Utter disgrace," he was going to add, when poor, ignorant Hepsy, thinking he meant " goal" screamed out :

" I'll tell all I know, indeed I will, only don't send me to prison."

And with the most astonishing rapidity she repeated all the particulars of her interview with Geraldine, whose face grew purple with anger and mortification.

" She brought me that half-sheet to-night," said Hepsy, in conclusion, " and told me what to do, and said how all she wanted was for Mr. Lawrence to marry Lilian. There, dear sir, that's all I know, as true as I live and draw the breath of life. Now, please, let me go home; I'll give up the money and the silk dress."

And without waiting for permission she darted from the room—went tearing down the walk at a rate highly injurious to her corse and the "spine in her back," of which she had recently been complaining.

Thus forsaken by Hepsy, Geraldine bowed her head upon the table, but refused to speak, until Richard said to her :

" Madam, silence will avail you nothing, for unless you confess the whole I shall to-morrow morning start in quest of Esther Bennett, who will be compelled to tell the truth."

There was something in Richard's manner which made Geraldine quail. She was afraid of him, and, knowing well that Esther would be frightened into betraying her, she felt that she would rather the story should come from herself. So, after a few hysterical sobs and spasmodic attempts to speak, she began to tell how she first overheard Mr. Thornton talking to his son of Esther Bennett, and how the idea was then conceived of using that information for her own purposes if it should be necessary.

Once started, it seemed as if she could not stop until her mind was fully unburdened, and almost as rapidly as Hepsy herself she told how she had gone ostensibly to buy the wedding-dress, but really in quest of Esther Bennett, who was easily found, and for a certain sum enlisted in her service.

" I was well acquainted with the particulars of Cousin Helen's marriage," she said, " well acquainted with Mildred's being left at Beechwood, and this made the matter easy, for I knew just what to say.

I had also in my possession one of Helen's letters; her handwriting was much like my own, and by a little practice I produced that letter which deceived even Uncle Thornton. I told Esther what to say and what to do, when to come to Beechwood and how to act."

" A neat trick indeed," chimed in the old man, " but what did you do it for?"

" For Lilian—for Lilian," answered Geraldine. " She is all I have to love in the wide world, and when I saw how her heart was set on Lawrence Thornton I determined that she should have him if money and fraud could accomplish it!"

" Yes, my fine madam," whispered the old man again, " but what reason had you to think Lawrence would marry Lilian, even if he were Millie's uncle?"

" I thought," answered Geraldine, " that when recovered from his disappointment he would turn back to her, for he loved her once, I know."

" Don't catch me swallowing that," muttered the old man. " He loves that putty head!"

" Hush, father!" interposed Richard.

And, turning to Geraldine, he asked :

" Did you suppose Esther and Hepsy would keep your secret always?"

" I did not much care," returned Geraldine. " If Lilian secured Lawrence, I knew the marriage could not be undone, and, besides, I did not believe the old woman would dare to tell, for I made them both believe it was a crime punishable with imprisonment."

" And so it should be," returned Mr. Wilton. " Every one of you ought to be hung as high as Haman. What's that you are saying of Lilian?" he continued, as he caught a faint sound.

Geraldine's strength was leaving her fast, but she managed to whisper :

" You must not blame Lilian. She is weak in intellect and believed all that I told her; of the fraud she knew nothing—nothing. I went to a fortuneteller in Boston, and bade her say to the young lady I would bring her that though the man she loved was engaged to another, something wonderful, the nature of which she could not exactly foretell, would occur to prevent the marriage, and she would have him yet. I also gave her a few hints as to Lawrence's personal appearance, taking care, of course, that she should not know who we were. Then I suggested to Lilian that we consult Mrs. Blank, who, receiving us both as strangers, imposed upon her credulous nature the story I had prepared. This is why Lilian became so quiet, for, placing implicit faith in the woman, she believed all would yet end well."

The confession she had made exhausted her strength, and laying her head upon the table, she fainted.

Mr. Wilton and her uncle carried her to her room, but it was Mildred's hand which had bathed her head and spoke to her kindly when she came back to consciousness.

Mildred, too, broke the news to the awakened Lilian, who would not believe the story until confirmed by Geraldine, then she wept bitterly, and upbraided her sister for her perfidy until the unhappy woman refused to listen longer, and covering her head with the bedclothes, wished that she, too, could die.

She felt that she was everlastingly disgraced, for she knew no power on earth could keep Mr. Wilton from telling the shameful story to her friends, who would thenceforth despise and shun her just as she deserved.

Her humiliation seemed complete, and it was not strange that the lapse of two days found her in a raging fever, far exceeding in violence the one from which Lawrence was rapidly recovering.

As the days went on and she still grew worse the old man scolded and fretted, wishing her in Guines, in Halifax, in short, anywhere but at Beechwood.

Owing to Mildred's interference, his manner changed somewhat towards Lilian.

She was not to blame, she said, for knowing as little as she did, and when he saw how really anxious she was to atone for all she had made Mildred suffer he forgave her in a measure, and took her into favour just as Lawrence had done before him.

It took but a week or so to restore the brightness to her face and the lightness to her step, for hers was not a mind to dwell long on anything, and when at last Geraldine was able to be moved and go home, she bade both Lawrence and Mildred good-bye naturally as if nothing had ever happened.

Geraldine, on the contrary, shrank from their pleasant words, and without even thanking Mildred for her many friendly offices in the sick-room, left a house which had been too long troubled with her presence, and which the moment she was gone assumed a more cheery aspect.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On a bright September morning, just eighteen years after Mildred was left at Mr. Wilton's door, there was a quiet wedding at Beechwood, and when it was over Richard Wilton had a son and Robert Thornton a daughter.

Few witnessed the ceremony, for it was Mildred's wish that it should be private, but there was one vacant chair she fair would have filled. Oliver was not there. Since his return to Beechwood he had never left his room, and while the words were being spoken which gave to Lawrence Thornton the maiden he loved better than his life, he lay with his face buried in the pillows, praying that he might have strength to bear this even as he had borne all the rest.

He would rather not see Mildred until he had become somewhat accustomed to thinking of her as another. So, on the occasion of her last visit to him he told her not to come to him on her bridal-day but to wait until her return. Then, calling her to him as she was about to leave the room, he laid his long white fingers upon her soft brown hair and prayed:

" May the Good Father go with Mildred wherever she may go. May He grant her every possible good, and make her to her husband what she has ever been to me, my light, my life, my all."

Then for a moment he held her to his heart, and kissing her forehead, her eyes, her lips, bade her a second time go, not come to him again until she had been some weeks a happy wife.

Many times during her joyous bridal tour did Mildred's thoughts turn back to that sick-room, and after her return to Beechwood her first question was for Oliver.

" Clubs is on his last legs," was the characteristic answer of Mr. Wilton, while Richard added :

" Poor boy, he has asked for you so often, and been so much afraid you would not be here till he was dead."

" Is he then so bad?" said Mildred; and calling to Lawrence, who was tossing Edith in the air, she asked him to go with her to the gable-roof.

" Certainly, Mrs. Thornton," he replied, with a mocking tone, and dropping Edith, who said :

" What for you call Millie that?" he went with her willingly to Oliver's humble room.

At the sight of them a deep flush spread itself over the sick man's cheek, and folding her arms about him, Mildred cried :

" You are better than they told me. You will live yet many years."

" No, darling," he answered, kissing her beautiful face; " I am so near to the river of death that I hear its voice in the distance. Heaven is almost reached, and now that I have seen you again I have no wish it should be otherwise. But, Millie, there is one request I would make of you. 'Tis my last, and you must grant it. You must let me have your husband to-night—just to-night, Millie. There is something I would tell him, and I can do it better when it is dark around me. Shall it be so, Millie?"

" Yes, Olly, yes," was Mildred's ready answer.

And so that night, while she lay sleeping with Edith in her arms, Lawrence sat by Oliver listening to the story he had to tell.

" My secret should have died with me," said Oliver, " did I not know that there is some merit in confession, and I hope thus to atone for my sin, if sin it can be, to love as I have loved."

" You, Oliver, you?" asked Lawrence in some surprise.

And Oliver replied :

" Yes, Lawrence, I have loved as few have ever loved, and for that love I am dying long before my time. It began years and years ago, when I was a little boy, and in looking over my past life I can scarcely recall a single hour which was not associated with some thought of the brown-haired maiden who crept each day more and more into my heart, until she became part of my being."

Lawrence started, and grasping the pale hand lying outside the counterpane he said :

" My Mildred, Oliver! I never dreamed of this!"

" Yes, your wife," Oliver whispered, faintly. " Forgive me, Lawrence, for I couldn't help it, when I saw her so bright, so beautiful, so like a dancing sunbeam. She was a merry, merry little creature, and even the sound of her voice stirred my very heartstrings when I was a boy. Then, when we both were older, and I awoke to the nature of my feelings towards her, I many and many a time laid me down upon the grass in the woods out yonder and prayed that I might die, for I knew how worse than hopeless was my love. Oh, how I loathed myself! how I hated my deformity, sickening at the thought of starry-eyed Mildred wasting her regal beauty on such as me. At last there came a day when I saw a shadow on her girlish brow, and with her dear head in my lap she told me of her love for you, while I compelled my

self to hear, though every word burned to my soul like heated iron. You know the events which followed, but you do not know the fierce struggle it has cost me to do right—to keep from her a knowledge of my love. But I succeeded, and she has never suspected how often my poor heart has been wrung with anguish when in her artless way she talked to me of you, and wished I could love somebody, so as to know, just to know, what it was. Oh, Lawrence! that was the bitterest drop of all in the brimming cup I had to drain. Love somebody!—ah, me, never, never human being worshipped another as I have worshipped Mildred Wilton, and after I'm dead you may tell her how the cripple loved her; but not till then, for, Lawrence, when I die, it must be with my head on Mildred's bosom. Shall it be so? May she come? Tell me yes, for I have given my life for her."

"Yes, yes," answered Lawrence, "she shall surely come."

And he pressed the poor hands of him who was indeed dying for Mildred Wilton.

Twenty-four hours had passed and again the October noon looked into the humble chamber where Oliver lay dying.

All in vain the cool night wind moved the light-brown hair or fanned the feverish brow where the perspiration was standing so thickly. All in vain were Hepsy's groans and the old man's whispered words: "Pity, pity, and he so young!" All in vain the deep concern of Richard Wilton and Lawrence, for nothing had power to save him, not even the beautiful creature who had pillow'd his head upon her bosom just as Lawrence said she should, and who often bent her head down to kiss the quivering lips, which smiled a happy smile and whispered back:

"Dear, dear Mildred."

"Let my head sink lower," he said, at last, "lower, so I can look into your eyes."

Very carefully Lawrence Thornton adjusted the weary head, laying it more upon the lap of his young bride, and whispering to Oliver:

"Can you see her now?"

"Yes," was the faint reply, and for a moment there was silence, while the dim eyes of the dying man fixed themselves upon the face above them, as if they fain would take a semblance of those beloved features up to Heaven.

Then, in tones almost inaudible, he told her how happy she had made his short life, and blessed her as he had often done before.

"Mildred, Mildred, dear, dear Mildred," he kept repeating, "in the better land you will know, perhaps, how much I loved you, dear, darling Mildred."

The words were no whisper now, and no one heard them save her for whom they were intended, and Lawrence, who, as Mildred's form shook with her emotions, passed his arm around her and thus encouraged her to sit there while the pulse grew each moment fainter and the blue eyes dimmer with the films of coming death.

"Haven't you a word for me?" asked Hepsy, hobbling to his side, but his ear was deaf to her and his eyes saw nothing save the starry orbs on which they were so intensely fastened.

"Mildred, Mildred, on the banks of the beautiful river in the sweet fields of Jordan I shall find again the little girl who made my boyhood so happy, and it will not be wicked to tell how much I love her—Milly, Milly, Milly."

They were the last words he ever spoke, and when Lawrence Thornton lifted gently the bright head which had bent over the thin, wasted face, Richard Wilton, standing near, said to those around him:

"Oliver is dead."

Yes, he was dead, and all the next autumnal day the villagers came softly in to look at him and steal a glance at Mildred, who could not be persuaded to leave him till the sun went down, when she was taken away by Lawrence and her father.

Poor Milly! her bridal robes, in which Oliver had evinced an interest, were exchanged for the mourning garb, for she would have it so, and when the third day came she sat with Hepsy close to the narrow coffin, where slept the one she had loved with all a sister's fondness. She it was who had arranged him for the grave, taking care that none save herself and Lawrence should see the poor twisted feet which during later years he had ever kept carefully hidden from view. Hers were the last lips which touched his—hers the last tears which dropped upon his face ere they closed the metallic case and shut him out from the sunlight and the air.

It was a lovely, secluded spot which they chose for Oliver's grave, and when the first sunset light was falling upon it Lawrence Thornton told to his fair girl-wife how the pale sleeper at their feet had loved her with more than a brother's love, and how the night before he died he had confessed the whole by way of atonement.

"Poor old Olly!" sobbed Mildred. "I never dreamed of that—I never dreamed of that," and her tears fell like rain upon the damp, moist earth above him.

Very tenderly Lawrence led her away, and taking her home endeavoured to soothe her grief, as did the entire household, even to little Edith, who, climbing into her lap, would tell her "not to cry, for Oliver was in Heaven with mamma and the baby, and his feet were all straight now."

Gradually the caresses and endearments lavished upon her by every one had their effect, and Mildred became again like her former self, though she could never forget the dear playmate of her childhood, the patient, generous boy who had shared her every joy and sorrow, and often in her sleep Lawrence heard her murmur: "Poor dear Oliver. He died for me."

A few more words and our story is done.

For one short year has Mildred been a happy wife, and in that time no shadow has crossed her pathway save when she thinks of Oliver, and then her tears flow at once; still she knows that it is well with him, and she would not, if she could, have him back again in a world where he suffered so much.

Well kept and beautiful is the ground about his grave, for Richard's tasteful hand is often busy there, and on the costly marble which marks the spot are inscribed the words:

IN MEMORY

OF

OUR BELOVED BROTHER.

In the distant city there is a handsome dwelling, looking out upon the common, and the passers-by speak of it as the home of Lawrence Thornton, and the gift of Richard Wilton, who made his daughter's husband rich and still retained a princely fortune for himself and little Edith.

Dear little Edith! how she frisks and gambols about her Beechwood home, filling it with a world of sunshine, and sometimes making the old man forget the aching void left in his heart when Lawrence took Mildred away.

That parting was terrible to the old man, and when Mildred suggested that Edith should live with her, he cried aloud, begging of her not to leave him all alone—to spare him little "Beauty."

So "Beauty" stayed, and every pleasant summer evening the old man sits on the long piazza with Edith on his lap, and tells her of another little girl who came to him one winter night, stealing in so quietly that he knew not she was there until reminded by her of his falling glasses.

Of this story Edith is never weary, though she often wonders where she was about those days.

As the old man cannot enlighten her in the least degree she usually falls away to sleep while speculating upon the matter, and her grandfather, holding her lovingly in his arms, involuntarily breathes a prayer of thanksgiving to the kind Providence which has crowned his later life with so many blessings.

Richard is a great comfort to his father, and a great favourite in the village, where his genial nature and many virtues have procured him many scores of friends. Even Mrs. Simms speaks well of him, and has latterly taken to petting Edith, and telling her in Richard's presence of her granddaughter, Sarah Ann, "who was brought up a lady, and had just come home from the 'academy.'

But the obdurate Richard seems wholly blind and deaf to the good qualities of Sarah Ann, and it is not probable that Edith will ever have a second mother.

Mr. Wilton has made another will, dividing his property equally between Spifire and Beauty, as he calls his two grandchildren, and giving to the "Missionaries," once defrauded of their rights, the legacy intended for poor Clubs.

Old Hepsy lives still in the gable-roof, and when her rent comes due Mr. Wilton sends her a receipt—not for any friendship he feels towards her, but because she is Oliver's grandmother, and he knows Mildred would be pleased to have him do so.

Esther Bennett is dead, and the old man, when he heard of it, brought his fist down upon his knee, exclaiming:

"There's one nuisance less in the world. Pity Madame Geraldine couldn't follow suit!"

But Geraldine bids fair to live to a good old age, though she is now seldom seen where the story of her perfidy is known and where her name has become a by-word of reproach. A crushed and miserable woman, she drags out her days in the privacy of her own home, sometimes weeping passionately as she reviews her sinful life, and again railing bitterly at Lilian, not for anything in particular, but because she is unhappy, and wishes to blame some one.

In Lilian there is little change. Weak-minded, easily influenced, and affectionate, she has apparently

forgotten her disappointment, and almost every day finds her at Lawrence's handsome house, where Mildred welcomes her with the sweetest smile. In all the city there is no one so enthusiastic in their praises of her cousin as herself, and no one who listens to said praises as complacently as her uncle Robert.

He is very fond of his daughter-in-law, very glad that she was not a beggar's child, and very grateful for the golden coin she brought him. In his library there are two portraits now instead of one, and he often points them out to strangers, saying, proudly:

"This was taken for my wife, the famous beauty, Mildred Wilton; while this, with the girlish pout upon her lips, is my son's wife, another Mildred Wilton, and the heiress of untold wealth. Hers was a strange history, too," he adds.

And, with a low bow, the strangers listen, while in far less words than we have used he tells them the story we have told—the story of Mildred, with the starry eyes and nut-brown hair.

THE END.

COUNSELS TO YOUNG MEN.

If thou art high or low, be just, be kind and noble in all your actions. To gain the love and friendship of all round you, be honest. Never indulge in vicious habits. Guard against evil company, for if you don't you'll be enticed slowly and surely into vice and corruption.

For company seek the learned and intelligent class, that you may become one of them. Heed and pay attention to the instructions of your superiors. Guard against pretended friends, for he is not a friend to you who when you are in want will cast you aside. There are far too many such friends, young man, and I pray you to be on the alert, and throw not your earnings away with these worthless vagabonds, that seek your company only for your money. When your money is gone their friendship will fly with the winds, and they will laugh at you with scorn and contempt in your penniless condition. Remember:

"That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,

Lead to the wretched, vile and base."

Keep your engagements, and man will put faith in you. Always be in readiness, be watchful, so as to gratify the wishes of your employers. Be polite and gentlemanly, whether in the company of the rich or poor. Strive to make it your object to keep a clear conscience, and you'll surely live in peace and happiness, which is "the tenderest flower of spring."

Seek not so much for riches, but be content with a little, so that you may ease your design, be pure, and carry no burdens. Employ your spare moments in study and doing good. Prepare yourself in youth for old age, for then you may enjoy the pleasures of a faithful life. Be a staunch, temperate, faithful and upright man. To make my article concise, take heed—

"Keep the commandments of God in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind." H. W. G.

An interesting discovery of a life-sized female bust in pure silver has lately been made at Heronaeum. A discussion has arisen whether the work was originally cast or chiselled, but there is little doubt that the former hypothesis is correct. The head is that of a beautiful young woman, but the features have not been identified with that of any other extant head.

THE RUSSIAN NAVY.—The total number of ships of war in Russian waters is 225, 29 of which are ironclads, and they carry 921 guns. Their total burden amounts to 172,401 tons, and their steam power to 31,978 horses. The personnel consists of 1,805 officers (including 81 admirals), 513 pilots, 210 artillery engineers, 145 marine engineers, 545 mechanical engineers, 56 marine architects, 297 Admiralty officials, 260 surgeons, 480 civil officials, and 24,500 subordinates of various ranks. The ships are distributed as follows: In the Baltic there are 27 ironclads and 110 unarmoured steamers, 70 of which do not carry guns, and the rest have about 2,000 guns in all. The same number of guns are to be placed on the ironclads, four of which are still in course of construction. The Black Sea fleet consists of two ironclads and 29 unarmoured steamers. The ironclads (one of which is not yet ready for service) are armed with four guns, and the other steamers, except four which do not carry guns, with 45. In the Caspian there are 20 unarmoured steamers, one of which is in course of construction, and 9 are without guns; the rest have 45 guns in all. The Siberian flotilla consists of 28 steamers, 7 of which carry 36 guns between them; and the Aral flotilla has 6 small steamers, 5 of which are armed with 18 guns. In the White Sea there are 3 ships of war with four guns. The Educational Department of the Russian Admiralty comprises a naval school for 265 pupils at St. Petersburg, a

scientific school for 220 pupils, a training school for 400 boys, and a writing school for 150 sailors at Cronstadt, and a midshipmen's school, a shipbuilding school, and a school for sailors' daughters at Nicolasoff. A sum of 442,941 roubles for the expenses of these schools is included in the budget of the present year.

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JOLLIETTE arrived home safely at the appointed hour, accompanied by Mr. Weston. Mrs. Malverne was waiting in the great entrance-hall, and welcomed her young benefactress with effusion. As soon as she had returned the greeting of the hypocritical widow, and had seen Mr. Weston conducted towards his rooms by the butler, Jollette hastened up to her own private apartments.

As the tap-tap of her tiny boot-heels resounded upon the polished hard-wood floor of the upper hall, her boudoir door swung open, and Mrs. Bittle, beaming with delight, gave her young mistress admittance.

As the door was closed and locked behind her Jollette exclaimed :

" Is everything right, Bittle ? How is my boy ? "

" Well and hearty, my lady," replied the serving-woman. " He has learned some new tricks since you went away, ma'am. How glad he'll be to see you back again ! "

Jollette tore off her hat and jacket with nervous eagerness.

" You think he will know me then ? " she asked. " Oh, I have been so impatient, so anxious about him. I could not sleep at night for fear that he might be ill again of croup. Nothing shall tempt me from home again. Has he been quite well during my absence ? "

" Yes, my lady. You know that Meggy has been obliged, ever since coming here, to take a walk at night. She could not stand the continual confinement, being so used to out-door exercise. Ever since you went away she has taken out Master Archie at night when she went to walk, and the out-door air, although it's night air, has done him a world of good. "

But if she had been seen ? "

" Oh, there's no danger of that, my lady. She carries the baby up and down the Monk's Walk, and no one ever goes there, you know, even in the daytime. The Monk's Walk, with the tall, deserted ruins on one side, and the tall trees overarching it from the other side, with the superstitions attaching to it, and the wilderness of a park creeping close up to it, is as safe as any dungeon, ma'am. "

" Yes, yes," said Jollette, with a glance at her reflection in the mirror. " Lay out my dinner-dress, Bittle. I have an hour to spend with my baby."

She passed through the dressing-room into the secret nursery, and, in spite of her sorrow for Miss Lyle's loss, in spite of her many and grave anxieties in regard to herself, she spent an hour in frolicking with her child.

He was a forward little fellow, with a gay, debonair baby beauty, with eyes as soft and blue as violets and full of innocent gladness. His mother's grief had not saddened his disposition. He was full of play and mischief and was now learning to creep upon the floor.

" Sir Mark Trebasil would give half his wealth to know that he had a son like this," thought the proud young mother. " But he will never know it—never."

She little dreamed that the baronet already knew of the child's existence.

Mrs. Bittle summoned her in time to dress for dinner. Her toilet was easily made. She wore deepest mourning garments, relieved only by white lace frills. No jet sparkled upon her person, no ornaments relieved the sombreness of her dress. She descended to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Malverne and Mr. Weston awaited her, and soon after the three adjourned to the great dining-hall.

After dinner there was music and conversation, and a game of chess between Jollette and Mr. Weston, while Mrs. Malverne executed certain brilliant fantasies upon the much-enduring grand piano, and at eleven o'clock Mr. Weston, who was to depart for London in the morning, said good-night and retired to his chamber.

Mrs. Malverne followed his example, and Jollette went to her own apartments.

Half an hour later came a gentle rapping upon Miss Stair's boudoir door. Jollette, who was in her dressing-room, herself opened the door. It was Mrs. Malverne who stood without, and, before Jollette could address her she slipped through the opening and stood within the room.

" I have come for a few minutes' private interview, Miss Stair," she exclaimed. " Pray don't refuse

me. I have something of great importance to say to you, something that concerns you as well as me."

" Can you not defer your communication until tomorrow, Mrs. Malverne ? " inquired Jollette, coldly.

" I have no time for business at this late hour."

" I must say what I have to say to-night," declared Mrs. Malverne, firmly. " I shall not detain you long."

The widow wheeled an arm-chair near the hearth, and deliberately seated herself. After a moment's hesitancy, Jollette closed the door leading into the dressing-room, and said :

" I am ready to hear what you have to say, Mrs. Malverne. Please be as brief as possible."

The young mistress of Blair Abbey leaned with careless grace upon the back of a pink silk armchair, and regarded her visitor with calm expectancy.

" You may as well sit down," said the widow, coolly.

" What I am about to say cannot be dismissed in a moment. I am about to speak of myself. You are aware that I was brought up by Madame Falconer as her prospective heiress, and that, but for my own folly and that old woman's vindictiveness, I should be to-day the owner of Blair Abbey, with all its farms and rent-roll ? "

Jollette bowed assent.

" I am not come here to lament the change in my lot," continued Mrs. Malverne, " or to reproach you for having usurped my place. You did well to profit by an old woman's infatuation. I should have done the same. The point I wish to dwell upon is this :

Having been brought up as heiress prospective of Madame Falconer's wealth, I became imbued with expensive tastes, a love of luxury, an appreciation of all that is elegant, refined, and costly. I married a spendthrift, who became an attaché to the embassy to China, and my tastes found no gratification throughout my married life. I became a widow and returned to England, hoping to retrieve my mistakes, but Madame Falconer had found a new favourite, and barely tolerated me under her roof. She died, leaving me nothing. Since then I have been a pensioner upon your bounty."

" Do not say that, Mrs. Malverne," said Jollette, gently. " I want you to feel that you have a claim upon me, that this is your home, and that I am your friend. Whatever I have done for you has been done as to a friend or sister—"

" Whatever you have done ? " sneered Mrs. Malverne. " It's little enough you've done for me, Miss Stair. What is a hundred pounds to you who have thirty thousand pounds a year ? The income you allow is less than the annuity Madame Falconer bequeathed to her sewing-woman, Bittle. A hundred pounds a year ! Why, when I was in town last month, I spent my half-yearly income on my dress and bought jewellery and costumes to the extent of the remaining half, promising to send the money on my return home. My old dressmaker, remembering my former grandeur, ventured to give me credit."

" I see," said Jollette. " You are in debt and are come to ask for an advance of the remainder of your yearly income."

" You mistake. I am come to say that I find the allowance portioned out to me totally inadequate to my requirements," said the widow, boldly. " I like to reside at the abbey, but I want also a home of my own to which I can retire when I please. I must be able to dress handsomely, to keep up a little establishment of some pretension, to support a small retinue of servants, a carriage and pair and a liveried footman. These are modest wants for one who was once virtually mistress of Blair Abbey with its retinue of thirty servants."

Jollette's face expressed surprise, even amazement, but she did not speak.

" I may as well state my demands at once," resumed the widow, deliberately. " I want you to give me a quit-claim deed of your freehold property of Throckmorton Villa on the Thames. I've been there often with Madame Falconer, and know that it will suit me. It has forty acres of pastures, fields, and water front attached, has a landing-stage, a boathouse, and a gay little barge. It is a gem of a place, or I should not want it."

" Is there anything more you will have ? "

" Yes. I must have a clear income settled upon me, beyond the power of your caprice to alienate from me, of one thousand pounds a year. I might claim, and obtain, too, five times that sum; but I am disposed to be moderate in my demands. You must have invested for me a sum which will yield one thousand pounds interest, and I must be able to draw the amount at stated periods at the Bank of England."

" Would you like anything more ? " asked Jollette.

" Nothing, except the furniture which is now at Throckmorton Villa, a pair of horses, and a carriage. That is all."

" I am constrained to think that your good sense is momentarily obscured, Mrs. Malverne," said Jollette, quietly. " Any claims which you might have had upon Madame Falconer, through her own generous kindness, you forfeited by your base ingratitude of years ago. You have no legal claims upon me whatever. Whether I might have increased your income to a reasonable extent if you had made the request in a proper manner, I cannot now decide; but one thing is sure; I will listen to no 'demands' from you. You are at liberty to retire."

The pale, olive face was very calm and very determined.

Mrs. Malverne contemplated its quiet haughtiness for a brief space, not offering to retire, and then said :

" Of course, Miss Stair, I do not demand these things without being able to offer you an equivalent. I will give you full value for your money."

" In what shape ? " asked Jollette, incredulously.

" Silence ! "

Miss Stair drew herself up haughtily, her little dusky face growing paler, her big black eyes dilating.

" I do not understand," she said. " Silence in regard to what ? "

" In regard to yourself. You are a living cheat, Miss Stair, and you and I know it ! " declared the widow, throwing off the mask at last. " You see that I have found you out. You pass to the world as a pure and honourable maiden, while you are secretly a mother."

Jollette reeled, her countenance white with horror. She sank down in her chair, gasping for breath.

" I have traced over your history," said Mrs. Malverne, mercilessly. " I know all about your stay at Château Croiseau. I know how much your doting old godmother, whom you managed to delude so that she lost all perceptions of womanly honour and virtue, covered and concealed. I wrote to the curé of Arpigny, and received a letter from him this morning."

Jollette shuddered and covered her face with her hands.

" You did not cover your tracks as well as you might have done," said her enemy, with a triumphant smile. " You should have assumed the title of a married woman. You should have given your son another name than that of 'Archibald Chichester.' Chichester, being Madame Falconer's family name, is but a badge of shame upon your boy. But Madame Falconer was new to such attempts to cover the wrong-doing of a woman. The curé told me that in May of last year 'the beautiful mademoiselle' gave birth to a son at the Château Croiseau, and that he had since learned that during her stay in Paris she passed herself off as a maiden—Miss Stair—and that one of her servants assumed to be the mother of the child. You see how thoroughly you are discovered, Miss Stair. I have seen your child with Meggy Dunn, and I suspected then that it was not her offspring."

The blood that had seemed chilled 'till stagnation in Jollette's veins began to circulate again. It was evident that Mrs. Malverne did not suspect the paternity of her child. It was evident that the good curé, either by reason of haste or reserve, had not written to the widow that the little "Archibald Chichester" had been registered as "the son of Sir Mark Trebasil and Jollette Trebasil, his wife." A great load seemed suddenly lifted from her. She could bear any suspicion in regard to her honour, anything but a revelation of the exact truth in its entirety.

" What else do you suspect ? " she asked, presently, in a stifled voice.

" You mean, perhaps, to ask what else I know ? I happened to go into your rooms one morning—your door was unlocked, and as I wanted much to see you I walked directly in—and I found on your bedroom floor a baby's sock, that showed that Meggy Dunn had been here in the night with your child. I have the sock now in my possession."

Jollette strove to command her thoughts. It might be possible yet to avert the impending ruin. She might buy the silence of this prying schemer, but she must first consult Mr. Weston.

" Mrs. Malverne," she said, " you are right in thinking that your silence is a marketable commodity. I will buy it upon the terms you offer, subject to a slight change. You shall receive the income and villa you demand, but not absolutely and beyond my power to change. You shall hold them as your own so long as you keep silence, no longer. I must have some check upon you, else after you shall have obtained what you desire you may betray me. And even this I will not guarantee until I shall have consulted with Mr. Weston. Give me to-night to think over your proposition. You shall have my answer in the morning."

She arose, and again stood leaning upon her chair. Mrs. Malverne also arose now, her full, fair face glowing with evil triumph.

" Very well then," she said. " We shall meet in the morning."

With an inclination of her head she withdrew.

She heard Joliette steal along the hall to Mr. Weston's door, and then retrace her steps. She heard Mr. Weston enter Joliette's boudoir a little later, and noticed it was after midnight before he quitted his client.

"It's all settled between them," she said to herself—"settled that I am to be bribed to keep silence."

She was right. Mr. Weston had advised Joliette to yield to the demands of the enemy, since they were in no position to defy her. Then he had retired.

But for Joliette the event of the night was not yet over.

She went into her dressing-room and changed her sombre mourning robe for a white cashmere dressing-gown, and unloosed her long black hair, and then entered her secret nursery.

Master Archie was either ill or in a wayward mood. He was screaming lustily, and Mrs. Bittle and Meggy Dunn were nearly worn out with their efforts to calm him.

Joliette took him in her own arms and he grew quieter, but his big, waked eyes and general restlessness alarmed her.

"He needs out-door exercise, my lady," said Meggy Dunn. "I took him out one night when he was just as he is to-night, and he dropped asleep just like a lamb. The fresh air and the breeze and the rustling of the branches of the trees set him off immediately."

"They are better for him than a sleeping potion," said Mrs. Bittle. "It don't seem just reasonable to carry a child out of doors at midnight for a walk, but he must go at night or not at all. If he could go out in the daytime, he'd sleep well enough at night."

"You must do as you think best," said Joliette, anxiously. "The night is fine, and the stars are shining."

"I want a walk," said Meggy Dunn, "and I will carry Master Archie."

"Do not stay long, Meggy," said the young mother. "I shall be very anxious about him, you know. There is always the harrowing dread of discovery."

She accompanied the nurse down the secret stair, and softly opened the postern door, peering out into the night.

And only a few rods distant, in the deepest gloom, on the Monk's Walk, waited Sir Mark Trebail, stern and remorseless as fate.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AMONG the Channel Islands over against the French coast, and not far from the island of Guernsey, is a tiny islet where rocky shores enclose a single acre of arable land. Fishermen have encamped here now and then from time immemorial, a spring of fresh water giving attractions to the spot, but for the most part it has been abandoned to the wild fowls and birds from which it derives its name of Bird Rock.

About ten days before the disappearance of Miss Lyle from Petrel House, a small fishing sloop put into the little indentation that served as harbour for Bird Rock, and a party consisting of three men and a woman disembarked and made a thorough examination of the islet, as they had on the previous day examined several others.

They found Bird Rock suited to their purpose, and within an hour had unloaded from their sloop a quantity of lumber, doors, windows, and hardware which seemed to be prepared and fitted for a special use.

In three days' time they had put up a neat and stout little cabin of boards, which contained two rooms. The inner room, made of double thickness, was not provided with windows. It was approached only through the outer room. This latter was the family room, and was provided with a capacious fireplace—for the new-comers had brought bricks with them, a larder and store-room, and two recesses for beds.

The cabin being finished, was whitewashed, and immediately assumed the appearance of an old settler. It stood in the midst of a little group of trees in the very centre of the islet, and commanded a fine view of the channel and of the French coast.

A quantity of furniture of the simplest description was brought up from the sloop. The inner room of the cabin was carpeted neatly and furnished with a lamp, an easy-chair, a narrow iron bedstead well equipped, and with toilet appurtenances, books, and sewing materials. The outer room was suffered to remain with bare floor and the belongings suitable to a fisherman's house.

The cabin done and furnished, the woman installed herself as its mistress.

This woman was the wife of Jack Nichols, who was the half-brother of Gannard.

Of the three men one was Gannard, the second was Jack Nichols, the third was Jack Nichol's son, an overgrown, brutal fellow of some two and twenty years.

The Nichols family had lived in London for a long time, Jack Nichols and his son picking up a living, more or less honest, as watermen on the Thames. Gannard had ignored their existence for years, and had only brought himself of them when he found it necessary to seek assistance in the furtherance of his own and his master's schemes. He had found it easy to procure their co-operation, and had bought the fishing sloop, landed it as we have seen, and had commenced an examination of the small, uninhabited islands of the Channel, with the result we have declared.

Having formally taken possession of Bird Rock, Gannard and the elder Nichols entered the sloop and sailed away, leaving Mrs. Nichols and her son upon the island.

The two men proceeded to the Dorset coast and on the very evening of their arrival, within an hour after they had come to anchor, they had secured their prize—namely Miss Lyle—and were again under sail.

It was a pleasant evening, bright with starlight, when the little fishing craft again dropped anchor in the little harbour of Bird Rock. This manoeuvre had ~~surely~~ been accomplished when young Nichols came hurrying down to the rocky shore.

"All right, Jeff!" sang out Jack Nichols.

"All right," assented the young man. "No one been here in your absence. Did you take in your cargo?"

"Yes, and it's in good condition," laughed the elder Nichols. "We're lucky, as usual."

There was no need to lower a boat, a wide plank sufficing to span the interval between the sloop and the rocks. Gannard unlocked the low cabin door and disappeared within the close chamber known as the cabin. He reappeared presently, bearing in his arms a struggling, girlish figure, which he deposited upon the floor of the cockpit.

"Yours to walk the plank between Nichols and me," said Gannard. "If you fall off or jump off it's your own lookout. We shan't try to save you. Lead the way, Jack."

The elder Nichols crossed the plank. Charlott Lyle hesitated and stole a look into Gannard's face. His eyes met hers with a look forbidding, commanding that she shrink away from him in terror, and without a word traversed the plank and stood upon the solid rock.

"Gone up the cabin," said Gannard, harshly.

Miss Lyle did not seem to hear him. Her assure eyes were sweeping the scene in one wild glance. Then her gaze explored the islet and settled upon the face of the three men, all of whom were staring at her.

"What place is this?" she asked.

"An island, as you see," said Gannard—"your home!"

"My home? What do you mean? Why have you brought me here?"

Gannard laughed.

"My dear niece," he said, with a triumphant insolence, "I have seen fit to engage board for you on this island for a few months, in the hope that the sea air may benefit your health. Your mind has not been quite right lately, as you must know. Mr. Jeff Nichols, this lady is my niece, Miss Maria Smith. And now, Maria, let us go up to the cabin."

Charlott Lyle's blue eyes blazed.

"Insolent scoundrel!" she exclaimed. "Are you mad man or knave?"

"Oh, come, come, Maria!"

Gannard put out his hand to take her arm, but she struck at him fiercely.

"Do not touch me!" she ejaculated. "Who is this madman?" and she turned to Nichols. "You know that I am not his niece—that I am no Miss Smith."

"I only know what the gentleman told me when he engaged me to keep you here a few months," asserted Nichols. "The gentleman said, as his name was Smith, and as he had a niece as lived at service at Petrel House, and as her brain was cracked through a love affair—"

"Then it may all be a mistake, and not an intentional outrage upon my liberty," cried Charlott. "I am the niece of Admiral Bohun, of Petrel House. My name is Miss Lyle. You know, Mr. Smith, that I am not your niece. You know—"

"I don't know anything of the sort," said Gannard. "It is true that I have not seen my niece for years, but I cannot be mistaken in her identity. I am acting by your father's directions, Maria, so am not your niece. You know—"

The hideous farce completely bewildered Charlott, but Gannard played his part to perfection. It was

not his purpose to avow his reasons for removing Miss Lyle from her home. He wished to conceal from her his identity.

Charlott was thoroughly perplexed and alarmed. She tried to reason with Gannard. Drawing out her pocket-book, she showed him her name in gilt lettering within it. She had a plentiful supply of bank-notes, gold and silver, and Gannard's eyes sparkled at sight of them.

"Let me see it!" he said.

Miss Lyle permitted him to take the pocket-book. He made a pretence of examining the inscription, glanced at the cards within, and then coolly declared that he was unable to read.

"I'll take care of your money for you, Maria," he added, benevolently, thrusting the wallet into his pocket. "And now march on to the house."

Poor Charlott protested and implored; but in vain. At length Mrs. Nichols appeared in the low doorway, and as Miss Lyle beheld her the girl felt an impulse of hope. Accordingly the captive turned from the three men and sped swiftly toward the house.

Mrs. Nichols retreated as Miss Lyle neared the cabin, and the girl paused on the threshold.

"Come in," said Mrs. Nichols, her hard red face wearing an unpleasing smile. "You are welcome, Miss—"

Charlott made haste to tell her story.

Before she had finished the three men came up and stood behind her, all grinning.

"And are you not Miss Smith?" asked Mrs. Nichols, in apparent surprise.

"Do I look like a servant?" asked Charlott.

"Well, you don't, miss; but Smith here said his niece had lived with gentlefolks as long as to become quite the lady," said Mrs. Nichols. "But if you are not Maria Smith, you shall start for home first thing in the morning."

"That man has my pocket-book with my name inscribed to it, and with some of my visiting-cards in it. Look at that, please," urged Charlott. "See my watch-andrings. Do these befit the Maria Smith whom you have taken me to be?"

Mrs. Nichols made a pretence of examining the articles in question, Gannard removing all his jewellery save his watch-andrings for the purpose.

"I shall have to dash up the dinner," said the woman, abruptly. "After dinner I'll look these things over more at my leisure."

The woman dropped the little diamond-studded watch-andring into her pocket. The men, laughing loudly, took their places at the table. Charlott's flight was cut off. Mrs. Nichols seemed to have become suddenly oblivious of her very existence. The atmosphere of the room was unbearable. Charlott walked into the inner room.

The lamp was burning in the chamber that had been prepared for the prisoner. The bed was neatly made. Charlott sat down in the easy-chair, and wondered at the absence of windows, and remarked that the room was ventilated through a screened opening in the roof.

In the course of a few minutes Mrs. Nichols brought in a cup of tea and a round of toast to the young lady. Charlott told her story anew, and the woman professed to believe it.

"You shall start for home in the morning, miss," said Mrs. Nichols, warmly.

Miss Lyle believed her and was comforted. She ate and drank what was placed before her, and retired to bed after commanding herself to the care of the great Father.

When she was fairly asleep Mrs. Nichols locked the door upon the outer side, and the party went down to the sloop.

"We must be off at once," said Gannard. "Keep the watch and trinkets for your share of the plunder, Martha, and remember as long as you keep the young lady safe, you'll have two pounds a week. Come, Jack."

Nichols followed Gannard aboard the schooner, and the younger Nichols also went aboard.

"I say, uncle," he whispered, drawing Gannard aside, "you played that Smith business pretty well, didn't you? That young lady's a regular high-flyer and I'm took with her. You said that we were to keep her always. What's to hinder my making up to her?"

Gannard slapped his nephew on the shoulder.

"Go in for her, Jeff," he exclaimed. "Marry her by hook or by crook, whether she's willing or unwilling, and I'll give you a hundred pounds on your wedding-day."

"I'll earn that money!" ejaculated Jeff.

He went ashore and the sloop sailed away with the two men on board.

"Yes," repeated Jeff. Nichols to himself, as he returned to the cabin. "I'll earn that hundred pounds, and, willing or unwilling, I'll make that pretty piece of aristocracy in yonder bay wife."

(To be continued.)



[THE CHILD'S PRAYER.]

LOGIC OF EVENTS.

"BROADCLOTH, kid gloves and shiny hats are all very well in their way, child—very well; but their way is small, you see." And Aunt Margaret paused in her knitting and smiled placidly upon her niece. "They do not usually make their wearer any better natured, or prevent their being ill as often as other folks; they never add to one's patience, kindness or love, and they never lessen one's selfishness, arrogance, conceit, or any other unpleasant quality that one may possess. If I were you I'd fall in love with the man first, and take time afterwards to get up a romance over his clothes!"

Rosa tossed her head impatiently, and darted a reproachful glance upon her aunt.

"You are always stirring Roland," she said, curtly.

"Oh, no, my dear; I haven't breathed his name."

"But you meant him, because he dresses nicely. According to your ideas a man can't be decent unless he is a farmer or a butcher, or engaged in some other dirty work! I hate farmers! I wouldn't marry one if there were not another man on earth! So you might as well quit vilifying Roland!"

"You use strong language, Rosa. I have said nothing against him; but as you have dragged his name into the subject I want to ask you a few questions concerning him. What is his business, dear?" she queried.

"I haven't asked him. I hate meddlers."

"Has he told you?"

"No."

"Has he ever spoken of his home or his parents?"

"No."

"Was he ever in Springwell before this summer?"

"No."

Aunt Margaret sighed, and gazed in mingled love and sadness upon her pretty, wilful niece. If allowed to have her own way, she would certainly cause herself and friends much sorrow; but how to curb her

impulse, to soften her obstinacy, was a question that seemed unanswered just now.

"I suppose you think I ought to have catechized him, as you have me," said Rosa, resentfully.

"No, dear, not that exactly; but I do think that before a young girl accepts a gentleman's company she should know his prospects, have some evidence of the respectability of his parents, and more as to his own character. Don't shake your head, Rosa; I am speaking thus because I love you—not because I wish to oppose you. Now, even from your own admission, you know nothing whatever of Roland Baylis; he comes here a stranger, with no recommendation save his good clothes and his polite manners; you accept his company; he talks finely, quotes poetry, sings sweetly, and you imagine yourself in love with him."

"Imagine! I tell you I do love him, and I always shall! No power on earth could make me doubt him!" interposed Rosa, passionately.

"My dear, innocent child, you don't know the meaning of your own words."

"Thank you, Aunt Margaret."

"Rosa, Rosa, do not misconstrue my words, I beg of you!" replied the old lady, with a weary sigh, for her patience was most severely tried. "Do not speak so quickly—reflect—remember that you are dear to me—that your joy is my joy, and your grief my grief; and when I say something you do not understand ask me to explain. You are young—"

"Youth is a crime of course! One is good for nothing until one becomes fifty years old!"

Tears sprang to Aunt Margaret's eyes, but she went on steadily, without otherwise noticing Rosa's unkind remark.

"You are young yet, dear; you have never seen the hard side of life, you have never learned how falsity may dwell in the heart while truth seems to shine from the face—how treachery may hide itself behind smiles—ay, tears, waiting only for a chance to crush its victim! Some have no mercy—"

"Oh, I've heard of it before! It's the old spider-and-the-fly story in a new dress!" interrupted Rosa, yawning.

Aunt Margaret dropped her knitting and clasped her hands firmly together. This cold indifference to her earnest counsels pained her deeply; this overbearing insolence awakened a just indignation in her breast. If love, devotion and pleading could have no effect upon Rosa what on earth could? Harsh means would only arouse and inflame her combative nature so that no one could live with her, much less control her. But there was one seemingly insignificant but really important point that Aunt Margaret had failed to notice. She began by ridiculing Roland; this shut Rosa's mind against all her subsequent words. If the good old lady had brought her love for her niece to bear at the outset, and approached the name of Roland more gently, she would have found Rosa tractable, and—this story would never have been written.

"There he comes! Oh, isn't he handsome?" exclaimed Rosa, jumping up and hurrying to the mirror to smooth her hair and arrange her collar.

Aunt Margaret looked out of the window, and beheld Mr. Roland Baylis leaning gracefully over the gate.

In the lapel of his coat a rose and pansy were conspicuous; in his immaculate shirt-front something very closely resembling diamonds glittered; on his vest a heavy gold chain added attractiveness to his general make-up; on his feet a pair of nicely fitting patent leathers shone like polished ebony.

When Rosa went out she looked first at his delicate black moustache, then at his white teeth, then at his yellow kids, and finally at his white vest. Oh, he was an Adonis! She didn't believe that the world contained another like him.

"Ah! you are so kind, Rosa, to come out. I was fearful that you wouldn't."

"Why?" she queried, archly.

"Because I'm so stupid a fellow. Now don't speak—I know it well enough, I assure you. I've often wondered how you could be so gentle with me, and bear with my senseless talk so well. You see my father always called me a noodle."

"He told the truth!" bawled one of the farm hands, addressing another. "The calf has come home!"

"Oh! aw!" said Baylis, fumbling his cane nervously. "What the deuce does the fellow mean?"

"He is talking to the ostler," said Rosa, trying to repress a smile.

"Oh, yes, of course! Quite a joke! always loves jokes, you know," he answered, with an insipid grin. "Come, let us walk down the road—the air is so balmy, the heavens so glorious with the resplendence of the declining sun that it is positively wicked to ignore it. You love to study the beauties of nature, I am sure; there is nothing so elevating; it lifts us from the vulgar thoughts of what we are to eat and drink, and brings us into close communion with the infinite—one—"

"That man is a fool!" commented Sarah, the housemaid, as she passed them by with uplifted nose.

I have no intention of following Baylis in all his shallow nonsense and weak quotations from doggerel rhymes; suffice it to say that he interested Rosa, and that she thought him "perfectly delightful," and believed him to be all that was good, true and noble.

"I have a few words more to say ma petite Rosa," lisped Baylis, rolling his eyes upward and sighing deeply. "But how shall I find language? I can't—I can't in all the mines of diction find jewels bright enough in which to set the desires of my heart! But, Rosa, I feel a divine passion for you—I love you better than I love my life—I plead with you to hear me—I entreat you not to doom me to despair! My angel, speak!"

Overwhelmed by this torrent of grandiloquent words, awed by what she in her simplicity deemed high poetic soul, Rosa stood silent and trembling.

"Oh, Rosa, breathe but one little word! My life is a barren waste without you!"

"I do love you, Roland," she murmured, softly.

"Oh, happiness most rare! And you will be mine?"

"Yes."

"To-morrow, my darling, ere the sun shall set? Oh, I cannot put off this bliss! What may not a day bring forth? You or I may die ere then—we must not tamper with fate. Say, Rosa, peerless Rosa, will you fly with me to-morrow?"

"Yes, Roland, for I trust you."

Excitedly the words came forth; the girl was a victim to her own imagination and the arts of this coxcomb. Blindly infatuated, she thought of nothing but the false glories that he had pictured to her. She deemed it impossible that unhappiness could follow their union.

Until nine o'clock he lingered by her side, and then, with a tender parting she left him, and went at once to her own room to reflect upon the bliss in store for

her. Ah, Aunt Margaret would repent her unkindness when she saw her in a little cottage of her own with Roland for a loyal and devoted husband.

But Aunt Margaret was a practical, keen-sighted woman, and she had not been asleep all this evening.

* * * * *

At two o'clock the next day Roland Baylin drove up to the farmhouse in a nice dog-cart to take Rosa up to ride a little way, if her generous aunt were willing." This "generous aunt" interposed no objections, and Rosa took her seat in the dog-cart.

With all possible speed Roland drove to the next town, some seven miles distant, sent the dog-cart back in charge of a boy, and walked to the railway station, with Rosa leaning heavily upon his arm.

Behind her was her home and loving friends—with her this stranger to whom she was about to give the control of her life.

Once or twice a faintness came over her heart, but a glance from those black eyes of his, a smile, or a kind word, was sufficient to turn her mind again to the future—to recall the fond vision she had dwelt upon with such rapture.

Soon the train came thundering along, and the lovers entered the rear carriage.

Rosa sat down, and, lifting her veil, gazed out upon the beautiful country through which they were flying; somehow, it never seemed so lovely before, and she wondered why. Was she leaving it for the last time?

Just then Roland spoke to her, and his voice banished the sad thought.

On, on, over the iron road glided the huge monster with its freight of human life, and at length it stopped.

"In an hour, darling, you will be mine, and I shall be yours, for all time!" whispered Roland, as they arose to leave the train.

She raised her eyes to his yearningly and yet sadly, and placed her hand upon his arm.

As they alighted a gaudily dressed individual brushed against Roland and whispered a word or two in his ear.

The latter paled slightly and bit his lip.

Fortunately Rosa did not notice it. Engaging a carriage Roland ordered the driver to proceed to the principal hotel. Once there and comfortably seated in an elegant room, Roland informed her with many regrets that he must leave her for an hour or so, that a very dear friend of his was lying at the point of death and that he must visit him.

"Oh, I cannot stay here alone!" exclaimed Rosa, tears starting to her eyes. "I am so nervous, and—Oh, you do not know how I feel. Let me go with you!"

"It is impossible, my darling! There, there—don't cry. I shall only be gone a little while. Duty demands it. I will be back soon; we will take the morning train for London, and there we will be married. Time will fly if you think of this."

She sank back in her chair and covered her face with her handkerchief. Uttering a few more tender words he kissed her cheek and left her.

Five minutes had not elapsed ere a sharp knock sounded upon the door, and, opening it, Rosa beheld a former schoolmate whom she had not seen over a year.

"Why, Laura Vane! Oh, I am so glad to see you. How did you know I was here?"

"Never mind—time is precious. Come with me—ask no question."

Almost stupefied with amazement, Rosa allowed herself to be led downstairs, to be hurried into a carriage, which was driven off at once at a dangerous rate of speed. Lying back upon the cushions she gazed at her friend in painful perplexity, but the latter said nothing except to occasionally urge the driver to greater speed. Reaching a low portion of the city they entered a narrow, dirty street, lined with tenement houses, before one of which the vehicle suddenly drew up.

"Come, Rosa, come quick. Follow me and say nothing," commanded Laura, sharply.

Rosa obeyed as one in a dream. Entering the building they ascended three flights of well-worn stairs and then, nearly out of breath, paused before the door of the rear garret.

"Open it and go in," said Laura, sententiously.

"For what? This mystery confuses me. I can't understand it."

"You will soon. I am your friend. Do as I tell you."

Rosa complied, but not without some misgivings. As the door swung open she beheld a child upon the bed, his little hands clasped, and his pale, thin face raised upward in prayer.

Beside the couch knelt a woman, poorly clad, her head resting upon her hands.

Awed by this solemn scene, rendered more im-

pressive by the evidences of desititution on every side Rosa stood silent and motionless.

The child had not heard her open the door, for he continued his touching prayer in his weak but sweet voice, and at intervals piteous sobs broke from the mother's heart.

"Our Father which art in Heaven, please send papa home to us, for mamma is ill and we—we are hungry. I don't know why papa goes away so, and leaves mamma and me alone; but he does, and it makes mamma cry, and we don't have much to eat. And a man comes for money sometimes, and mamma hasn't any, and then he says we will have to go out doors. Oh, dear Heavenly Father, please make papa love us again, so mamma needn't work so hard, and make herself ill. Please make him come and stay with us, so we can have as much as we want to eat, and so mamma needn't sit up all night. I wake up and see her often."

He paused, bent down, and, putting his little hand on his mother's head, added hopefully:

"Now he'll come, mamma."

"Oh, my blessed child!" cried the poor woman, and, holding the little form close to her heart, she rained kiss after kiss upon his cheek, while the tears flowed from her eyes. Then, looking up, she saw the strangers, and, hastily putting the child in bed, came forward to greet them.

"You will excuse me, Mrs. Lang, for coming in without knocking, but I had a purpose in view," said Laura, kindly. "You don't know me, but I know you. Be assured our visit is not one of curiosity, neither is it to offer you any shallow consolation. If you will let us wait here a half-hour or so I shall be obliged; then I will show you that I came for deeds and not for words."

"You are welcome, ladies, though my room is not such as you are accustomed to," rejoined Mrs. Lang in a low voice. "You heard my child's words, I suppose; you see I am reduced, but do not let the fact oppress you. Maurice almost always comes after Willie prays for him."

"Yes, mamma, he's coming now. I hear his step on the stair," said the child, eagerly.

Laura tapped Rosa upon the shoulder, and whispered to her to take a chair, and sit back towards the bed. Rosa obeyed, and her friend took off her shawl and threw it over Rosa's shoulders. The next moment hasty footsteps were heard in the entry; the door was pushed open, and the coarse words followed:

"What do you want of me?"

Rosa started; a cold chill went over her nature, and seemed to stop the pulsations of her heart. It was Roland's voice—her Roland—the chief among men—he of the noble heart and poetic soul.

"Oh, my husband! thank Heaven, my husband!" ejaculated the woman, ignoring his cold words and throwing her arms around his neck.

He submitted to the embrace with a great deal of reluctance, and then spoke a word to the child.

"What are these women here for?" he asked.

"One to help your suffering wife and child, the other to have her eyes opened!" answered Laura.

Rosa understood it all now. For a moment it seemed that she could not retain possession of her faculties, then strength came to her, and, arising, she confronted her false lover with a glance of mingled pity and contempt.

He threw up his hand and staggered backward; then, seeing with relief that she was not going to speak, he laughed and dropped into a chair.

"What does this mean?" said Mrs. Lang, in blended anxiety and suspicion.

"A case of mistaken identity," answered Maurice Lang, alias Roland Baylin.

"Exactly; you were taken for a man and found to be a villain," responded Laura, quietly.

The wife covered her face with her hands; she evidently feared that her husband had committed some crime.

The child, becoming infected with the same apprehension, began to cry, when Laura went forward, placed a ten-pound note in his hands and told him to keep it for his mamma. His face lighted at once, and, having pushed the money under the pillow, he kissed his benefactress, and asked her to come again.

All this time Rosa had stood with her eyes fixed upon Roland. He did not avoid her glance, but met it with a sneer. Scorn, indignation, and loathing passed alternately over her features, and then she walked slowly from the room as one who had lived years in one brief hour.

Laura was at her side now, and in silence they walked downstairs and entered their carriage.

Neither spoke as they rode back to the hotel; but the instant Rosa entered her room the tears burst in a flood from her eyes.

At that moment she felt an arm creep around her neck, and heard Aunt Margaret's gentle voice.

"Oh, auntie, are you here?" cried Rosa, and sank upon her breast with a sigh of relief.

"Yes, my dear, I promised your mother on her death-bed that I would watch over you, and I have tried to keep my word."

"You have—you have! And I have been so unkind to you, so ungrateful! Oh, auntie, my shame is more than I can bear!" sobbed Rosa.

"No, no, darling, you have no cause for shame, only for regret that you would not allow your reason to overcome your wilfulness, but perhaps it is all for the best. From the first moment I saw Roland I suspected him, and I sent a detective to watch him—that detective was Sarah the housemaid! I found that he had a wife—I communicated with Laura, and, having discovered your plot to elope, made up this one to meet it! It has succeeded—my little girl sees her weakness and will profit by it, I am sure."

"I will—I will, if you can forgive me. I feel—I feel as if I had no right to forgiveness though, for I was so cross and obstinate—oh, auntie, my heart will break!"

And she clung to her like a child, while choking sobs welled up from her perturbed breast. Aunt Margaret soothed her as best she could, and ere long Rosa became more composed; but she could not raise her eyes to her aunt's face; her remorse was most keen. They took the late train for Springwell, and at eight o'clock were once more in the dear old farmhouse.

Rosa wept again then, and reproached herself very bitterly.

Weeks passed ere she appeared like herself, and then she told her aunt with much solemnity that she should never marry, that she would never trust another man, and that she would always live with her and try to make up for her unkindness to her.

Aunt Margaret smiled in her quiet, placid way, and said that the future would determine that; and Rosa had confidence enough now in her aunt's wisdom not to contradict her.

One year later Rosa came to her aunt, and with many blushes and much hesitation told her that she believed she was in love again, and asked her if she had better marry.

"Who is it now, dear?"

"Frank Harlan. I think he is good, don't you, auntie?"

"Yes, dear, and he has loved you for years; but he is a farmer."

"Don't auntie, please; I was but a perverse child then. I hope I am a woman now."

And thus through the logic of events Rosa was brought to her senses.

J. S. B.

PRECOCIOUS CHILDREN.

NEVER be anxious to have your children precocious. It is often the very smart child that makes the commonplace man, and the dunce who makes his parents ashamed of him that at last becomes distinguished.

The boy likely to be "somebody" in due time will probably be that torment of your life who poaches preserves, fights his brothers, and is brought in black and blue from bruises gained in a fall from some neighbour's apple-tree; while the excellent little fellow who is at the head of his class, and never wears out the knees of his trousers, will disappoint your expectations.

As for the juvenile orator who recites:

"Wuin seize thee, wathless king."

and "Twath midnight i' thith gnarded tent,
The Chirk wath dweameing of the hout," to the great joy of his relatives, who have him rechristened Demosthenes, because the name is "so appropriate"—no one ever yet saw him at manhood swaying the public by his oratory. The real Demosthenes is named Jack or Tom, and stutters and stammers in his youth, as the genuine original did before he thought of putting pebbles in his mouth.

Besides, the very worst way to make a genius of a boy is to bring him up for one. Under such training, if he has not the real stuff in him, he will become a conceited jackanapes. If he has the real stuff in him, it will develop itself in its own fashion, and at its own time; and nature will generally postpone that time until his legs are sturdy, his arms strong, and fun, frolic, and a good appetite have done their best for him, and made his body capable of helping his mind at its work, which is something more necessary than parents who like show-children are apt to think.

M. K. D.

A DISTINGUISHED R.A. of Scotland recently went into a fruiterer's shop in Glasgow. "How much for this cucumber?" demanded the R.A. "Eightpence, sir," said the worthy dame at the counter. "Oh, nonsense!" said the would-be purchaser. "I am only a poor struggling artist, and cannot give more than sixpence." "Deed, sir," said the dame, "I

ken ye well, and many a time I've been in your study to see the bonny show ye keep there. Struggling artist indeed!" "Have ye so?" returned the painter. "Then there's sixpence for the caucuber, and ye're swing me twopence for admission to the show!"

SECOND LOVE.

I DON'T believe in it. I have often heard first and second love spoken of as synonymous terms, but I cannot note them very favourable on such a ground, as the former, if properly engraven on the right soil, has nothing to do with the latter.

There is no such love as second love in existence, as I view it from my standpoint of thinking. I may be wrong, and am perfectly willing to let the mantle of charity fall on those that can prove differently, wishing them happiness in the enjoyment of their own utopian views. True heaven-born love is not a hothouse plant that can be cultivated in a few moments. No, far from it! It is a God-given impulse, and, to be genuine, it must flow spontaneously.

There is a love—and one that I can classify as first love—one that will admit of no competition. When the telltale, gossiping eyes depict too plainly the every emotion of the heart, when the ideal is all-sufficient and a comparison is truly odious, when the heart is completely lost in its own identity, when that confidence, purity and freshness of feeling (casting out all fear) if ripe in its development of action; when the thought will vibrate in the same channel, with the rapidity of a whirlwind, and the same electrical wires of the heart and mind will produce the same current of magnetism and harmony, when their natures will, like drops of water, become as one, and if a thousand miles apart the spell will not be broken, and a similarity of ideas if compared by each other will be correspondingly the same. A perfect blending, a perfect vibration. The key-note of such a love can be struck but once in a life-time, and cannot find a duplicate. It may come at the dawn of womanhood, or the noon-time of life, or at a later period, and many persons go down to their graves without experiencing it at all.

When I hear persons speaking of their second love being greater than their first, or that they never thought they could love the second time so much better than their first love, it only proves there is no second love. They never started right on their first journey of love, and the second choice struck the right chord of their heart, consequently the failure was in not being thoroughly satisfied in their first attempt and finding they were rightly mated only in their second choice. I don't think that marriage has anything to do with it, as a general rule—such contracts are formed under such different circumstances and sometimes under unfavourable auspices, thereby causing domestic unhappiness and the unhappiness of many families. A Christian if true at the beginning will always remain one. If the germ of religion is rightly implanted on his moral nature, it can never be uprooted—his backsliding is only a fair specimen that he never was a Christian.

On the same principle is the principle of first love; if a person has properly loved once he can never totally annihilate the emotion or love in the same manner again. A true union is an exceptional case in this nineteenth century. Ah, the human heart! It is a world in itself! It is generous in its nature, having many apartments to let, susceptible to many emotions, desiring a great deal to entirely, or partially, satisfy it. It is a question of wonder with me, that as often as the heart is bent that more do not become completely broken. I will admit that a person can be rationally happy with another, (having truly loved and lost). He may appreciate certain lovable qualities, certain traits of character which are pleasing to him, certain beauties of mind congenial in many respects, thus rendering him comparatively happy, but the couleur de rose of the first love will never return with the same lustre and beauty, and the memory of happy days will come again through the vista of the past, with the pleasant thoughts and the clustering recollections of happier hours—like birds will sing sweet songs at the shrine of the heart in the same delicious strains as of yore.

"I hold it true what'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

And in conclusion may I ask what is love? Is it not in self-abnegation, in self approval, to make another happy at the sacrifice of self? and it being one of nature's unutterable laws, it should become greater and more fervent with every hour of our existence—it only fails in its immutability.

W. M.

In reply to the Home Secretary's circular on amendments of the law relating to crimes of violence,

the Sheffield magistrates have decided to recommend the infliction of the cat as a punishment for brutal assaults upon women and children. The magistrates of the Bulmer east division of the North Riding advocate the penalty of the cat in all cases of assault with brutal violence.

USE OF WEALTH.—Few will deliberately maintain that the acquisition of wealth, individual or national, is the principal ingredient in human happiness. Most will agree that the enjoyments which wealth affords are generally overrated, and that the true welfare of man consists, not in the extent of his possessions, or the gratifications they afford, but in the perfection of his moral and intellectual nature, and the improvement and enjoyment of his active powers. At the same time, the stoical doctrine which ascribes no value whatever to external enjoyments is inconsistent with the present state of humanity. The beautiful productions of nature are intended as a source of enjoyment, which the active powers we are endowed with enables us to diversify and enlarge, while the exertions made for their attainment tends to improve these powers. The abundance of articles subservient to the comfort and convenience of life, provided they be not misappropriated to intemperance, affords no inconsiderable addition to the human happiness.

SOME ONE TO LOVE.

PERHAPS one of the most positive proofs that we have of the soul's independence of the body is our great need of love and of something to love. Were we mere animals, creatures doomed to perish after a few brief years of life in this world, that which contents the brute would also content us. To eat and sleep well, to have an easy time of it, would be enough. As it is, we may have all these things, and health to enjoy them, and yet be utterly wretched. Neither can mental food satisfy us. "Some one to love," is our heart's cry. When the atmosphere of tenderness is about us we rejoice, when people are harsh or unkind we suffer.

We begin life wishing to love all people and believing that they love us. Experience hardens us. Our dear ones grow fewer; but as long as reason lasts we must love some one, we must at least imagine that some one loves us. The parents, sisters and brothers, that cherished friend whom we promise to cherish until death parts us—these come into our lives and fill them up. Afterwards come the little children, frail, helpless babes, who need our care so much, and friends to whom we are not kin, yet who grow dear to us.

Some have many loved ones, and some but one. Heaven help those who have none, though they are generally to blame for their empty-heartedness, for kindness will win love. They are always wretched, they often show their craving for something to love by cherishing some dumb animal—a dog, a kitten, a parrot perhaps—or which they lavish caresses, which better spent, would have bound some human heart to them. Pride or morbid sensitiveness may have been at the bottom of their loneliness, and these pets of theirs fill the aching void a little. Some one to love! It is the cry of the human soul, the note to which every heart responds, the bond which will bind us all together in that other world where mourners shall be comforted and love shall reign for ever.

G. N.

NO ONE PERFECT.—One day you will be pleased with a friend and the next day disappointed in him. It will be so to the end, and you must make up your mind to it and not quarrel, unless for very grave causes. Your friend, you have found out, is not perfect. Nor are you; and you cannot expect to get much more than you give. You must look for much weakness, foolishness and vanity in human nature; it is unhappy if you are too sharp in seeing them.

A WELSH HERMIT.—The following is the natural history of a hermit!—For thirty years he has lived in a cave near Dingman's Ferry, Pike county, Pennsylvania. The excavation is six feet by eight feet. Name, Austin Sheldon. Birthplace, Wales. Age, about seventy years. Diet, berries and fruit. Has worn the last suit for twenty years. Never shaves. Is deaf. Reads the bible most of the time. Never has a lamp, and sleeps upon straw. Charms birds. Owns an acre of real estate around the cave. Never works. Says he expects to be buried in the cave when his time comes.

A GERMAN OPINION OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH NAVIES.—M. Montz, of the German navy, has published an essay on armour-plated ships. He shows that the triumph of artillery over armour-plating is certain. Amongst other opinions he says that he prefers the French to the English fleet, which he imagines could not have blockaded the coast of Germany in 1870 with the same efficacy as the former did; though how he arrives at such a conclusion, and what difficulty there could have been in the matter,

he does not vouchsafe to divulge to the benighted islanders. He also declares that the French fleet is constructed in a more intelligent and practical manner than the English. It is inferior with respect to the thickness of its armour, but it is much better arranged. England would be unable to collect a squadron of ships of the same type and able to co-operate together. Each of the vessels of the British navy differs, as it were, in system, in dimensions, and in power. The English constructors appear to have had nothing in view but invulnerability, as though afraid of their continental neighbours, while France has often sacrificed power and safety to the exigencies of combined action. There is no doubt that our navy is an odd mixture, and there is nothing so wholesome as criticism; but we trust, for the sake of our neighbours, that the blockading capacity of the British navy may not be tested by any of them.

FACE-TIME.

An inquiring man thrust his fingers into a horse's mouth to see how many teeth he had. The horse closed his mouth to see how many fingers the man had. The curiosity of each was fully satisfied.

JUST SO.—"A really dreadful person!" "A creature!—there's no other word for it." "But of course you will accept her invitation?" "Of course! Where you go I am sure I can; and, after all, one need not ask her back."—Judy.

REASONABLE REQUEST.—Scone, the Strand.—Old Lady: "Conductor, I want to go to Ludgate Hill; but would you mind going along the Thames Embankment way to it, because I am so dreadfully afraid of going through Temple Bar?"—Judy.

NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.

Respectable Man: "Dear me! I'm sorry to see this, Muggles. I heard you'd left off drinking."

Disreputable Party: "Sh! I 'av', sir—lie—josh 'ish' very minute!"—Punch.

AMONG THE LAWYERS.—On the first day of Term Mrs. Malaprop went to Westminster, to witness the opening of the Courts. Having so often heard of the puny judges she was agreeably surprised at their size.—Punch.

A WARTH OF TIME.

Elderly Coster: "I tell yur what it is, Sack; if you go getting such harristocratic notions into your head you'll go to the dogs. The idea of a fellow like you washing himself—with soap, too—every morning!" Fun.

A RELEVANT REMARK.

Lady Teacher: "You must recollect that all I am telling you happened one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four years ago!"

Sally: "Lo! miss! How the time do slip away!"—Punch.

THE TRIALS OF A DISTRICT VISITOR.

The Honourable Miss Fuddus (loq.): "Is Mrs. Higgins within?"

Mrs. Townsire: "I'll call 'er, m'mum." (At the top of her voice.) "Mrs. Ig—gins! E'er's the person with the trad'! (To the honourable miss.) The lady will be down presently, m'mum!"—Punch.

COOKIANA.

Engaging and nearly engaged Cook: "And now, ma'am, may I ask how many servants you keep besides myself, if I come?"

Lady: "Only two!"

Cook: "Ah! then I'm afraid I must decline! The fact is, I can't get on without my rubber of an evening!"—Punch.

TWO SHEPHERDS.—The Bishop of Wurzburg once asked a sprightly little shepherd boy, "What are you doing here, my lad?" "Tending swine." "How much do you get?" "One shilling a week." "I also am a shepherd," continued the bishop, "but I get much more pay." "Then I suppose you have more swine under your care," innocently replied the boy.

ODD AND EVEN.

Mr. Mug (to his Keeper): "I can't understand it! The first season you were with me there were no foxes; the second there were no pheasants; and this year we've had neither one or the other."

Keeper: "Well, sir, I never shot no foxes, and you never hit no pheasants; so we ain't neither on you answerable, as I can see!"—Punch.

SMART YOUTH.

Queenie (reading): "What does 'S-o-i-t-o V-o-o-c-e mean, ma, dear?"

Ma (to son): "Now, George, you say you are getting on so well at school; see if you can inform your sister."

Young Eltonian (with dignity): "Why, you little stool! surely you know 'Sotto' is Latin for set, and 'Voca' is voice. So of course it means spoken in a drunkard's voice—indistinct!"—Punch.

OVER-ANXIOUS.

Brown: "You know Mrs. Woffington always fulfils the duties of a hostess so charmingly."

Mrs. Penelope Woffington (elated): "Oh, I don't know, Mr. Brown, you flatter me. To be all that you say I am a hostess ought to be young and beautiful. And then—"

Captain Fitz-Smith: "Oh, dear no, not at all necessary—think rather the reverse; at least"—with a show of gallantry—"you are a proof of the contrary, my dear madam."

ZOOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE.

The recent explosion of gunpowder at Regent's Park seems to have affected some of the animals in the "Zoo" considerably. Our "Special Reporter," who was on the spot, has sent us the following notes:

The lion shed his coat, telling the lions that after this he never could re-mane where he was.

The hyenas laughed on the wrong side of their mouths.

The polar bear took a chill.

The elephant packed his trunk.

The porcupine tied up his bundle of quills.

The pelican of the wilderness filled his pouch; and

The leopards changed their spots, and looked out for others less exposed.—*Judy.*

"COOL."

Here is a bona-fide advertisement—cut from a reliable newspaper:

WILL ANY LADY RECEIVE for three or six months, immediately, a Lady, of refined and agreeable manners, accustomed to good society, musical, good reader; without remuneration, except laundry. A Christian family desired; good references. Unforeseen circumstances breaking up a refined home. Would prove a great comfort to any delicate lady during the winter months.

Such "comfort," we presume, to be set against the more material comforts which this refined and agreeable lady wishes to obtain in return for the valuable privilege of her company. "Without remuneration, except laundry" means, we suppose, that the lady will pay her own washing bill; but perhaps it means she won't, and that the only payment she requires for her society is the amount of her washerwoman's weekly charge.—*Punch.*

THE FINE OLD RAILWAY PASSENGER.

Air—Obvious.

I'll sing you a brand new song of the melancholy fate
Of a fine Old Railway Passenger, of limited estate,
Who always liked to travel at the intermediate rate,
And tipped the porter to reserve the seat in which he sat,

Like a fine Old Railway Passenger,
One of the Second Class.

His brow so bold was snugly sheathed in a cozy sealskin cap;
And he had a rug to case his knees whens'er he took a nap,
And he looked as if for all the world he didn't care a rap.
With his hands in town-sewed dogskins reposing in his lap,

Like a fine Old Railway Passenger,
One of the Second Class.

But all at length must bend to fate, whatever may betide;
And the "Midland," which he travelled by, a novel scheme, have tried;
So henceforth now by "First" or "Third" this good old man must ride,
Which will involve a struggle 'twixt the pocket and the pride

Of this fine Old Railway Passenger,
Late of the Second Class.—*Punch.*

CLERICAL RUMOUR.

Some of our readers will surely remember the Rev. Mr. W., whom of Cambridge. I knew him well, and, in the other years, heard him preach often. He was a good man; genial; warm-hearted, and impulsive; and, though a dear lover of the really good things of earth, he was deeply religious and truly devout. His fund of humour was overflowing, and he was fond of a joke. In fact so easily and naturally did repartees fall from his lips, that at times he laid himself open to severe criticism by the particularly sober and sedate.

On a certain occasion he was preaching in Malden. It was in the winter-time, and the church was heated by a large, old-fashioned, cast-iron box-stove, long enough to take in "four-foot" sticks of wood; and this stove was situated in the broad aisle directly in front of, and near to, the high pulpit.

In the midst of sermon-time the old stove began to smoke fearfully. The sexton tried to draw it, but only made it worse.

As he opened the stove-door and stirred up the green wood with the poker the smoke rolled up in a dense volume, completely enveloping and blinding the minister; but distinctly, we heard from out the cloud, in a hearty, cheery, tone:

"Courage, courage, my friends. We may yet hope that the smoke of our torment will not ascend for ever!"

On another occasion he preached in Arkworth, and at the close of the afternoon services he gave out the hymn, commencing:

"I love to steal awhile away."

By one of those accidents which will sometimes happen in the best-regulated choirs, the chorister had selected one tune and the organist had pitched upon another. The first four notes of the two tunes were similar, but at the fifth the divergence was great. The chorister's voice was loud and clear, and with a wave of his hand to the choir, he commenced:

"I love to steal—"

And there he stopped. The next notes of the ponderous organ were crashing.

He commenced again:

"I love to steal—" and stopped once more.

Four times this was done, until both choir and congregation were in a ferment, when the clergyman, with a twinkle of the eye, and a smile wreathing his rotted visage, came to the rescue:

"It is very much to be regretted, I am sure. Let us pray."

S. C.

ing camphor and retaining this refractory body in its powdered state, have not alone been numerous but curios. Glycerine is the simplest and most efficient substance to keep camphor in a finely divided state. Take camphor 5 ounces, alcohol 5 fl. drachms, glycerine 1 fl. drachm. Mix the glycerine with the alcohol and triturate it with the camphor until reduced to a fine powder.

REMEDY FOR BURNS.—The white of an egg has proved a most efficacious remedy for burns. Seven or eight successive applications of this substance soothes the pain and effectually excludes the burn from the air. This simple remedy seems preferable to collodion or even cotton. Extraordinary stories are told of the healing properties of a new oil which is made from the yolks of hens' eggs. The eggs are first boiled hard, the yolks are then removed, crushed and placed over a fire, where they are carefully stirred until the whole substance is just on the point of catching fire, when the oil separates and may be poured off. It is in general use among the colonists of southern Russia as a means of curing cuts, bruises and scratches.

STATISTICS.

SOURCES OF OUR COTTON SUPPLY.—In the year 1873 our supply of cotton from the United States amounted to \$32,373,616lb., an increase of 207,000,000lb. over the preceding year's import thence. From British India we received in 1873, \$67,649,744lb., a decrease of 76,000,000lb. From Egypt, 204,977,186lb., an increase of 27,000,000lb.; and from the Mediterranean, exclusive of Egypt, 8,670,816lb., an increase of 600,000lb. From Brazil, 72,480,868lb., a decrease of 40,000,000lb. From New Granada and Venezuela, 3,693,088lb., or only half the quantity of the preceding year. From the British West Indies and British Guiana, 1,070,160lb., a decrease of 320,000lb. From Mexico, 24,448lb. From China, 1,016,848lb., an increase of 764,000lb. From other countries, 35,155,668lb., an increase of nearly 3,000,000lb. The total import of cotton into the United Kingdom in 1873, was 1,527,595,224lb., an increase of 119,000,000lb.; but, as our export of cotton declined to 220,000,256lb., there remained with us 1,307,595,968lb., an increase of 172,000,000lb. over the quantity in the preceding year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A JACK weighing 20lb. has been caught in the Thames near Bray.

The best of lessons for a great many people would be to listen at a keyhole. It is a pity for such that the practice is dishonorable.

It is announced that at the Hôpital Bourgeois of Lucerne, water from the shrine of Lourdes is sold at three francs per bottle for the cure of invalids.

One of the latest discoveries in the excavations at Rome is a magnificent bust, in perfect condition, of the Empress Faustina, wife of Trajan.

It is reported that Queen Isabella is about to sell her diamonds, estimated at a value of 12,000,000fr. They are to be disposed of in London.

The Tay salmon fisheries belonging to the Earl of Wemyss were let recently at rents much higher than last year. On two stations alone the rise was 30%. The total for twelve stations is 3,225%, against 2,638% last year, being an increase of 58%.

ACCORDING to calculations made with the view of ascertaining the fact, it is computed that the recent terrible accident at Thorpe Junction will cost the shareholders of the Great Eastern Railway between 180,000 and 200,000.

THE NEW ACT ON ATTORNEYS AND SOLICITORS.—The Act of Parliament to which reference was made in the Court of Queen's Bench on the first day of Term, and of which but few persons seemed to be aware, was passed on the day of the prorogation. The object of the statute is to amend the law relating to attorneys and solicitors, especially as to the restrictions contained in the former Acts as to the employment of articled clerks, which may now be relaxed in the manner prescribed. The law is also altered as to applications to remove attorneys from the rolls, and also where applications are made for attorneys to answer matters contained in affidavits. In all such applications notice must be given to the Registrar of Attorneys; and in the case before the Court of Queen's Bench the Act had not been complied with, and the matter stood over, as the Court was prevented hearing the application until the notice had been given. The Registrar is entitled to appear and to draw up rules in pursuance of the order made. Farther, the Act provides penalties against persons wrongfully acting as an attorney or solicitor and prohibits disqualified persons from recovering costs. The Act is the 37 and 38 Vict. c. 68.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

To REMOVE MILDEW FROM LINEN.—Mix soft soap with starch powdered; half the quantity of salt, and a piece of lemon, and lay it on both sides with a painter's brush. Let it be in the open air—on grass is preferable, till stain is removed.

POWDERING CAMPION.—The methods for powder-

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
MISCELLANEOUS ...	119
THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUM- STANCES ...	97
REGALIA CASTLE ...	100
AFTER THE SEASON ...	100
TRAVELIAN; OR, EN- TOMED ALIVE ...	101
THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCHYARVA; OR, THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES, COM- MENCED IN ...	103
EXPECTATIONS, COM- MENCED IN ...	103
THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUM- STANCES, COMMENCED IN ...	104
COMES HOME ...	105
MARLIN MARDUKE ...	109
CAST ON THE WORLD ...	111
EXPECTATIONS ...	114
LOGIC OF EVENTS ...	116
SECOND LOVE ...	118
FAC'THIE ...	118
GEMS ...	119
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ...	119
STATISTICS ...	119

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

—A.—No. It is not usual.

RUFERT C.—You should approach the subject in a more delicate way.

J. A. B. F.—The handwriting is distinct and good enough for any practical purpose.

DELLA, FAIR ANNE of CLY, and G. R. F. W. will be answered next week.

JAMES R.—A mere error in a name will not invalidate a marriage.

F. J. D.—The offspring of your muse entitled "The Merry Month of May" is too immature for publication.

R. S. (Crown).—The pieces you have sent about "The Storm" and "The Lifeboat" would not, we are afraid, be generally appreciated.

J. F.—Send the other verses. Then we may be better able to form an opinion, which might or might not be favourable.

GEORGE DE P. (Liverpool).—Your letter would perhaps receive a more satisfactory reply if it were addressed to one of the medical journals.

N. H.—The address "London" will be quite sufficient for a letter addressed to a personage so eminent as the lady for whom you inquire.

FRED H.—Take ten drops of the concentrated solution of chloride of soda in a wine-glassful of pure spring water every morning before breakfast.

E. H.—A marriage contracted by an illegitimate child who has assumed his father's name is legal so far as the question of name is concerned.

A. W.—You have simply to state your wishes in good faith and in your communication furnish all such particulars as are salient to the circumstances of the case.

H. G. H.—You did not allow time enough. When you read this you will very likely perceive that the matter received such attention as it was in our power to bestow.

LITTLE ANNIE.—The handwriting and spelling are good. You need no scruples as to walking out with any gentleman whom you would not hesitate to introduce to your relations and friends.

G. B.—It is difficult to understand how any acquaintance with a view to marriage can be effected while you are serving on board ship. It seems also as if the matter should be postponed until you are staying on shore.

ALICE MAUD.—Fresh air and exercise, together with an occasional suitable purchase at a chemist's shop, are all you require to remove your ailments. Young ladies usually have their hair turned up at the age of eighteen.

GENTLE ANNIE.—The handwriting is hardly neat enough for the object you have in view; the mistakes you have made in the spelling would also, if repeated, lessen your chance of success.

A CONSTANT READER.—There seems to be some mistake in the name you have chosen. "Heroine" is certainly not a suitable epithet for a young gentleman aged nineteen.

U. W.—1. Green seems to be the colour you require. You should choose a dark or bright green, but not a sea-green. 2. The Duke of Edinburgh was married on Friday, the 23rd January last.

THE LADY OF CLY.—A homely remedy for the warts about which you write is the following:—Cut an apple and rub it for a few minutes over the wart; the juice of the apple will loosen the wart and in a few days it will drop off.

FANNY.—The recipe for the sauce inquired for in the special property of its manufacturer. All that we can tell you is that the bases of most of the sauces sold at the shops are soy, walnut-peels, burnt treacle, capiaconine, vinegar, anchovies and sprats.

DARKEY.—The skin will resume its natural appearance during these winter months, when the sun has lost its "tanning" power as far as the inhabitants of the British Isles are concerned. You need no artificial aid. Nature will do all that you require.

W. R.—The only things likely to be beneficial to your hair are frequent cuttings and washings. To improve your handwriting purchase at a stationer's shop one of those copy-books which have a copy printed at the top of the page, and write on one page every evening.

TAZOL.—Decayed teeth are not injurious to the health, except so far as they hinder the process of mastication, but they are a sign of bad health. They should be stopped by a dentist, in order that any unpleasantness which attaches to them should be removed and their usefulness, if possible, be preserved.

PANCHETTE.—1. A person who sells goods in a shop is not compelled to have his name over the door, nor to have a license, unless he deals in exciseable articles, such as tobacco, wines and spirits. 2. There is no law to prevent any person adopting any name he or she may wish to adopt.

WILLIE.—To be unsympathetic with a youth, who, al-

though only in his teens, is yet in search of a wife, is to incur perhaps the grave displeasure of many estimable people. And yet who would commit the happiness of a daughter to the inexperience of eighteen? Young folks properly sometimes, rather advise in love matters, but none the less is it a sound and a prudent thing to say that a young man would do well to defer his practical considerations of matrimony until he is three or four-and-twenty.

CRAZUS.—The countenance, as shown by the photograph attached to your letter, is not so repulsive as the name de plume you have chosen for the occasion might have led us to expect. Whether such a face as this could belong to a trustworthy janitor we are inclined to doubt. We dislike the foggy appearance about the eyes and the small speech which there seems to be between the eye-brow and the top eyelash. There are indications of fierceness and determination, combined with the good qualities of intelligence and industry. Then the well-thought-over effect is pleasing. We look to the eyes to see how what is good will be used. But in vain. The artist perhaps is at fault.

MARY E.—It is as natural and unavoidable that a bright, smiling face should attract attention as it is for the sun to shine and diffuse cheerfulness amongst us all. We therefore should say that it would be wrong of you to endeavour to divert any civilities bestowed on you, which no doubt are justly due, merely in deference to some gossip which may be current about you. Obedience to the opinion of the world is all very well in its way, but when this worldly wisdom would have a pretty, unconscious young lady become unnatural and over-sensitive, and when it would convert a bright smile into a glum primness or a sickly prudishness it oversteps its peculiar province, and, like most other busybodies, becomes very mischievous. Continue to be natural, continue to be good, be especially careful to be polite to the "some people" referred to; do resto, etc., one of your many champions might say "Hon soit qui mal peuse," do you simply take care that the gossip shall be, as hitherto it has been, without foundation. 2. Your handwriting is very good.

THOSE SONGS OF OLD.

O! sing to me those songs of old,
That I so loved to hear
When buoyant, youthful days were mine,
Those days that were so dear;
Those songs that thrilled my heart and soul
With inspirations pure,
And made me feel an inward joy
I never felt before.

As seatedneath the vine-clad porch
We passed the hours away,
When moonbeams played on all around,
On every flower and spray,
When earth and sea and sky were still—
No sound to strike the ear
But the sweet music of that voice,
That was to me so dear.

Ah! could those days but come again,
When hand-in-hand we strolled;
To me it seems but yesterday,
So fast the years have rolled,
Since first I stroked those curls of gold
And saw that laughing eye,
And faltering, asked, "Will you be mine?"
And heard love's sweet reply.

But now the days are past and gone,
And manhood's years are come;
Age is creeping on apace
To take us to our home,
Then sing to me those songs again,
That I so loved to hear
When buoyant, youthful days were mine,
Those days that were so dear.

G. R. R.

FAIR ANNIE OF ENGLAND.—1. Our list of the mountains of Europe contains the names of one hundred and seventy-four, commencing with Mont Blanc in Sardinia, 15,774 feet high and closing with Arthur's Seat (Edinburgh) in Scotland 823 feet high. The four next in altitude to Mont Blanc are Monte Rosa in Sardinia, 15,151 feet high, Mont Cervin in Italy, 14,836 feet, Finsteraarhorn in Switzerland 14,026 feet, and Jungfrau in Switzerland, 13,716 feet. Amongst familiar names of lesser altitude we note Etna in Sicily, 10,872 feet, Olympus in Thessaly, Europe, 9,749 feet, Parnassus in Greece, 8,083 feet, Pindus in Greece 7,000 feet, Mount Athos in Greece 6,776 feet, Delphi in Greece 5,725 feet, Puy de Dome in Central France 4,807 feet, Ben Nevis in Scotland 4,406 feet, Vesuvius in Italy 3,922 feet, Snowdon in North Wales 3,590 feet, Skiddaw in Cumberland, England, 3,058 feet, Choriot in England 2,669 feet, and Gibraltar in Spain about 1,440 feet. 2. A mountain system signifies any particular group of mountains found in a given locality, or stretching across a tract of country in the same direction, or containing similar geological formations. The mountains of Europe of which particulars were given above have been divided into systems, namely, the British, the Spanish, the Alpine, the Sardinian, and the Samonian. A river system signifies a series or number of rivers flowing in one direction, whether they are tributaries to one great stream, or whether they are a union of two or more great streams. Take for example the great river system in North America which drains nearly a million square miles of territory—the Mississippi system. It consists of three great branches, the Missouri, the Mississippi, and the Ohio, each a magnificent river, into which flow numerous tributaries. 3. The principal islands are the British Isles, in the North Atlantic Ocean, Iceland, in the same ocean, Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, in the Arctic Ocean; coming down south we find Sicily and Sardinia, in the Mediterranean Sea, Cuba and Jamaica, in the gulf of Mexico, Madagascar, Sumatra, Borneo and New Guinea, in the Indian Ocean, and Australia and New Zealand, in the South Pacific Ocean. 4. Your last question asks—How does Physical Geography differ from Descriptive Geography and from Geology? In answer, we beg to say that these things are not in opposition, but in agreement. They are branches of the same science, the science which treats of all that is material in, on, or about the earth as

it is affected by natural causes, which must be distinguished from causes in which man is an agent. These division of the science of geography which are opposed to Physical Geography are Mathematical Geography and Political or Historical Geography.

W. H. twenty-two, dark, rather good looking, wishes to marry a nice young man in H.M.S.

JENNIE, seventeen, tall, fair, good looking, of a very loving disposition and fond of music, would like to correspond with a gentleman who is twenty-three, tall and of a loving and true disposition.

MARIE'S BRUSH, twenty-four, medium height, rather dark, domesticated and fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman between twenty-five and thirty, in a good position.

LOVING HARRY, Mr. em., dark-brown hair and eyes, considerate good looking, and with good prospects, would like to correspond with a young lady who is good looking, loving, accomplished and has some money.

BELINDA, a governess, twenty-four, tall, dark, and well considered, wished to correspond with a gentleman, with a view to matrimony. She is loving, considered amiable, thoroughly domesticated, would try to make any gentleman a good wife, fond of home and children.

LASSIE is in want of a husband who would know how to appreciate an affectionate, dutiful wife; a tradesman or mechanic preferred, between thirty-five and forty. No fixed need apply, as she would make any sensible man a good wife.

GENTLE ANNIE, twenty-two, rather tall, fair complexion and light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, of a loving disposition and thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman about twenty-six who is fond of home and has steady habits.

MAR FLOWERS wishes to marry an affectionate gentleman about thirty and respectfully connected. She is twenty-two, medium height, blue eyes, brown hair and very domesticated; she would prefer him dark and good looking.

ANNIE, a young girl, rather nice looking, very sensible and domesticated, would like to correspond with a nice, agreeable young man with a view to matrimony; she would like him to be rather tall, but is not particular about looks; he must be earning something over a pound a week.

OSMAN, a warm-hearted Scotchman, thirty-two, holding a responsible position as a clerk in the city, of medium height, with black hair, dark-blue eyes, fresh and healthy complexion, of agreeable temperament and quiet, steady habits. His predilection is in favour of an educated respondent about twenty-five, stout and handsome and not quite penniless.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

FLORENCE E. S. is responded to by—"Durwont," twenty-two, 5ft. 10in., dark, and a clerk.

MARY by—"T. B." twenty-five, and in a good position.

LILY OF THE VALLEY by—"John W." dark hair and eyes, a mechanic, and in comfortable circumstances and of a respectable family.

HAROLD, ALL ALONE by—"Amy L. S." nineteen, medium height, dark, slender, and considered good looking.

ANNIE by—"T. B." twenty-six, highly respectfully connected, in business for himself, and thinks he is just what "Annies" requires.

S. M. S. by—"A Farmer," thirty-five, a widower and a Methodist; thinks he is all she requires. He is considered very good looking.

JAMES W. C. N. by—"Minnie," who is seventeen, tall, fair, extremely good looking, and of a loving, cheerful disposition.

EDWRS by—"Lillian," nineteen, who thinks she is all he requires; she is of a loving, cheerful disposition and is sure she will make him a good wife. She is tall, fair and considered very pretty.

M. H. by—"Ethel D." who considers herself suitable to his requirements. She is eighteen, fair, has blue eyes and light-brown hair, is loving, fond of home, a tradesman's daughter, good looking, and would be most happy to become a sailor's wife.

BEAT TO WINDWARD HILL by—"Nellie," who is thirty, fair, and would make a loving wife; by—"Sissie," nineteen, fair, with an abundance of auburn hair, considered very pretty by her friends; and by—"Grace Darling" who thinks he will suit her, especially if he is a sailor. She is twenty-four, fair complexion, good looking, and a good figure.

ALFRED ALL ALONE by—"Isabelle C." twenty, medium height, dark complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, very handsome, loving, and domesticated; by—"R. S." domesticated, and all that could be wished for in a wife; by—"Lively," twenty, considered pretty, thoroughly domesticated, fond of business, and very loving; and by—"Lillian," eighteen, rather tall, fair complexion, considered good looking, domesticated, very affectionate, but has no other prospects than a loving heart.

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